BAHA'I HISTORY

FEBRUARY

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1. February 1. On this date in 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings..." (was #192)

2. February 1. On this date in 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted." (was #191)

3. February 1. On this date in 1898, George Jacob Augur arrived in Hawaii. An early American Bahá'í who converted in Hawaii, he was the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Japan and was named a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi. (was #190)

4. February 1. On this date in 1921, Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, the first Bahá'í to permanently settle in Brazil and the "Spiritual Mother of the Bahá'ís of Latin America," arrived in Rio de Janeiro. She would die in 1980 in Bahia. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously linked the name "Bahia" to "Bahai". (was #189)

5. February 1. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... of the Cause that you can appreciate the real message that Bahá'u'lláh has brought to the world. Only then would you see how incomplete and futile is the work of the other societies and movements that at present exist in the world." (was #188)

6. February 1. On this date in 1968, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "...Bahá'u'lláh's statement that the consent of all living parents is required for marriage...whether they be Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, the parents' decision is binding, whatever the reason that may have motivated it." (was #187)

7. February 2. On this date in 1984, the Bahá'í International Community provided a nine page commentary on two documents circulated by the Government of Iran, including one listing "Bahá'ís (or alleged Bahá'ís) who are identified as having held high office under the Shah." (was #186)

8. February 2. On this date in 1849, Mullá Husayn-i-Bushru'i, the first believer in the Báb, died in the Battle of Fort Tabarsi. Being the first believer in the Báb, Mullá Husayn-i-Bushru'i was the first Letter of the Living, being titled Jináb-i Bábu'l-Báb ("Gate of the Gate"). (was #185)

9. February 2. On this date in 2001, Rose Perkal died. An American Bahá'í who served on the NSA of Alaska, she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Kodiak Islands. She later pioneered to South Africa and served on the its NSA. She also established the Bahá'í Faith in the Bantustan of Ciskei. (was #184)

10. February 2. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The world is seeking as never before, and if the friends will arise with new determination, fully consecrated to the noble task ahead of them, victory after victory will be won for the Glorious Faith of God." (was #183)

11. February 2. On this date in 1941, Marina Núñez del Prado, a celebrated sculptor, became the first Bolivian Bahá'í. She did not remain active, however, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar, who became a Bahá'í on May 18, 1941, is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. (was #182)

12. February 2. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "The signs of the promised revival of your sorely-tried Fatherland can now be easily discerned. In material prosperity it is steadily advancing, its power and worldly prestige are being fast regained...." (was #181)

13. February 2. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "...above all the dawn of a spiritual awakening, unparalleled in your history, seems at last to have broken upon it. His sure and often repeated promise will erelong be fulfilled." (was #180)

14. February 2. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern States", which is the 9th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan". (was #179)

15. February 3. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "In English translations of the Sacred Bahá'í Writings personal pronouns referring to the Manifestations of God or to 'Abdu'l-Bahá should invariably be capitalized." (was #178)

16. February 3. On this date in 1969, Harold Thomas Fitzner died. He was a member and Chairman of the NSA of Australia and New Zealand and a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Portugese Timor. He was also involved in the publication of the Australian Bahá'í periodical Herald of the South. (was #177)

17. February 3. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There can be no protection for the Faith unless the friends are willing to submit to their administrative bodies, especially when these are acting in good faith; and the individual believers are not in a position to judge their National Body." (was #176)

18. February 3. On this date in 1958, the Custodians cabled the American Hands of the Cause of God "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.." (was #175)

19. February 3. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The crisis that exists in the world is not confined to the farmers....The present and perhaps the near future is dark, but we have the wonderful promises of the Master before us and they shall all become true...." (was #174)

20. February 3. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "For Bahá'u'lláh has promised His Divine assistance to everyone who arises with a pure and detached heart to spread His holy Word, even though he may be bereft of every human knowledge and capacity, and notwithstanding the forces of darkness.. (was #173)

21. February 3. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As to teaching work in colleges and universities, this is very important, for students as a whole are open-minded and little influenced by tradition. They would easily enter the Cause if the subject is properly presented and their intellect.. (was #172)

22. February 3. On this date in 2016, the Research Department addressed a memo to the Universal House of Justice regarding an alleged Iranian census of Bahá'ís "to have been conducted by the Greatest Holy Leaf around the time of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (was #171)

23. February 3. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Souther States", which is the 10th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan". (was #170)

24. February 4. On this date in 2021, the UHJ affirmed that "...the Bahá'í writings affirm the generally held perspective that there are two sexes, male and female. This, of course, is not in conformity with some recent social theories that divide gender into multiple types." (was #169)

25. February 4. On this date in 1958, Horace Holley, Secretary of the NSA of the U.S., responded to a cable from the Custodians sent one day previous stating "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands....grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.." (was #168)

26. February 4. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... the reading of these with friends who are interested in and crave for this type of small meeting is often a step towards attracting them to the Faith. Perhaps you could start such an activity in your city." (was #167)

27. February 4. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "... in their heart is planted the seeds of the Bahá'í teachings which in time will germinate and bring forth wondrous fruits. All these young people when they return home will carry the Message with them..." (was #166)

28. February 4. On this date in 1915, Agnes Alexander attended attended her first Esperanto meeting in Japan. She would later write "God used this language, which came into the world through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, to spread His Message in Japan." (was #165)

29. February 4. On this date in 1906, Kathryn Alio was born. An early American Bahá'í who pioneered to Alaska, Lesotho and Iceland, she served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska. (was #164)

30. February 4. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice cabled all NSAs "ANNOUNCE PURCHASE STRIP LAND GREAT NORTHERN LONDON CEMETERY FACING BELOVED GUARDIAN'S RESTING PLACE ENSURING PROTECTION SACRED PLOT. PRAYERS GRATITUDE OFFERED DIVINE THRESHOLD. UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE" (was #163)

31. February 4. On this date in 1974, Charles Mason Remey died. Mason Remey was a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian. An architect, he designed the Ugandan and Australian Bahá'í Temples. (was #162)

32. February 4. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote Australian Bahá'ís "no such directions" regarding "the best way to make their investments secure during the coming world crisis." (was #161)

33. February 4. On this date in 1954, Mahvash Sabet was born. She is one of the Yaran, the ad hoc administrative structure established in Iran after that country banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order. (was #160)

34. February 4. On this date in 1910, during his trip around the world with Howard C. Struven, Charles Mason Remey addressed a letter to the Bahá'í Assembly of Washington, DC from Rangoon, Burma, which was later published in the "Star of the West" magazine. (was #159)

35. February 5. On this date in 1986, the UHJ addressed a letter to all NSAs to clarify confusion generated by a letter written on "2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'í's of the world" regarding the definitions of various "epochs" and "Ages." (was #158)

36. February 5. On this date in 1918, Shaykh Kázim-i-Samandar, the author of "Tárikh-i-Samandar" died. Born into a prominent Bahá'í family of Qazvin of Bábí and Shaykhi background, Shoghi Effendi identified him as one of the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh. (was #157)

37. February 5. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...we are a new organism, the dawn-breakers of a New World Order, must constantly animate our Bahá'í lives, and we must pray to be protected from the contamination of society which is so diseased with prejudice." (was #156)

38. February 5. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The friends must, at all times, bear in mind that they are, in a way, like soldiers under attack. The world is at present in an exceedingly dark condition spiritually..." (was #155)

39. February 5. On this date in 1938, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í News Service Committee stated "The Guardian wishes your Committee to capitalize all pronouns when referring to Bahá'u'lláh, the Bab and the Master, even though the newspapers do not use them." (was #154)

40. February 5. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote "the term 'Bahá'í World Faith' ... The designation 'The Bahá'í Faith' is more dignified and preferable. Any adjective added to this name tends to a diminution of its stature and might be taken to mean that there are other 'Bahá'í Faiths'." (was #153)

41. February 5. On this date in 1969, the UHJ wrote "children of Covenant-breakers, who have grown up with and still associate with their parents, are probably thoroughly infused with the Covenant-breaking spirit, and the friends must not associate with them until the Hands of the Cause have...." (was #152)

42. February 5. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís as the "materially most powerful, spiritually most endowed nation mankind's most critical pregnant ordeal tests spirit challenges audacity promoters Divine Plan" (was #151)

43. February 6. On this date in 1845, the Báb departed Medina, having completed his Hajj pilgrimage. The Báb performed the Hajj after the eighteen Letters of the Living had accepted him as the Báb. (was #150)

44. February 6. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote "the Bahá'í Writings affirm that the human soul comes into being at the time of conception. However, they do not clearly define the exact biological moment and nature of the event described as conception and this may, indeed, be a question that is..." (was #149)

45. February 6. On this date in 1956, Ahang Rabbani was born in Tehran, Iran. A prolific Bahá'í translator and historian who served as director of statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre from 1981 to 1988. His translation are said to whitewash, censor,and obfuscate problematic matters in Bahá'í scripture (was #148)

46. February 6. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "...a prayer collectively and congregational prayer. The latter is a formal prayer usually led by an individual using a prescribed ritual. Congregational prayer in this form is forbidden in the Faith except in the case of the Prayer for the Dead." (was #147)

47. February 6. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "..I trust in His ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] wondrous love for me. May I in no wise by my deeds, thoughts or words, impede the stream of His sustaining Spirit which I sorely need in facing the responsibilities He has placed on my youthful shoulders..." (was #146)

48. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "Just as there are laws governing our physical lives...so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being.. (was #145)

49. February 6. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife...." (was #144)

50. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera..." (was #143)

51. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ quoted Shoghi Effendi has having said "Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation." (was #142)

52. February 6. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Spain an LSA "is correct in its decision to conduct the Nineteen Day Feasts in Spanish and to not translate the proceedings in Persian, especially in view of the fact that some of the Spanish friends are becoming alienated..." (was #141)

53. February 6. On this date in 1981, the NSA of the US wrote it "has no documentation verifying the authenticity of the illustrations in Mr. William McElwee Miller's book, and as such they cannot be regarded as being of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab." One year previous the UHJ had written otherwise. (was #140)

54. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh..." (was #139)

55. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome." (was #138)

56. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "...as a counselor in family and sexual problems...as a Bahá'í, you know that what Bahá'u'lláh teaches about the purpose of human life, the nature of the human being and the proper conduct of human lives, is divinely revealed and therefore true..." (was #137)

57. February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "...Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering." (was #136)

58. February 6. On this date in 1986, an individual wrote the UHJ. The reply states "When two Bahá'ís are marrying, the wedding ceremony should not be held in the place of worship of another religion, nor should the forms of the marriage of other religions be added to the simple Bahá'í ceremony." (was #135)

59. February 6. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The task is so overwhelmingly great, the realization of the inadequacy of my efforts and myself so deep that I cannot but give way and droop whenever I face my work..." (was #134)

60. February 7. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Frankfurt, Germany, and another in Padua, Italy. (was #133)

61. February 7. On this date in 2001, an individual asked the UHJ the "Two great powers" referred to in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd. The UHJ replied "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia." (was #132)

62. February 7. On this date in 1916, the "Star of the West" published a letter by Charles Mason Remey describing "the great Mashrak-el-Azkar of the east," in Ashkabad. (was #131)

63. February 7. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh in quoting this passage seeks to refute the argument of the Muslims, who attach a purely literal interpretation to this verse of the Qur'an, and therefore consider it as implying bodily resurrection." (was #130)

64. February 7. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It seems both strange and pitiful that the Church and clergy should always, in every age, be the most bitter opponents of the very Truth they are continually admonishing their followers to be prepared to receive!" (was #129)

65. February 7. On this date in 1910, Charles Mason Remey wrote Corinne True a letter stating "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers." (was #128)

66. February 7. On this date in 1862, the eminent Orientalist Edward Granville Browne was born. He published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá'u'lláh and leave a description of the experience. (was #127)

67. February 7. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "no objection to the word 'Missionary' appearing on your Passport... 'missionary' a Bahá'í pioneer is... a narrow-minded, bigoted type of proselytizing quite alien to the Bahá'í method of spreading our teachings." (was #126)

68. February 7. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote Wellesley Tudor Pole "I have had a long talk with Col. Symes" regarding the right of access to Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji by Mandate authorities to Bahá'ís and Covenant-breakers alike. (was #125)

69. February 7. On this date in 1977, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer stated "As for the status of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Faith, he is not considered by Bahá'ís to be a prophet, minor or otherwise." (was #124)

70. February 7. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice announced the selection of a design for its permanent seat. The Seat of Universal House of Justice was designed by architect Hossein Amanat, who also designed the International Teaching Centre Building, the Centre for the Study of t (was #123)

71. February 8. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice responded to an individual inquiring about "methods followed in researching, understanding and writing about historical events." (was #122)

72. February 8. On this date in 2001, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice about the Muslim practice of takfir, declaring someone an unbeliever, whether this is practiced in the Baha'i Faith, and questions related to "church and state." (was #121)

73. February 8. On this date in 2001, the UHJ wrote all NSAs regarding the "Applicability of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" noting that some "are not at present universally binding upon the friends," including the punishment of an arsonist by immolation to death and multiple other fines (was #120)

74. February 8. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote the chapter titled "The Administrative Order" in his book "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," referring to "the deeds of its present and future Guardians." (was #119)

75. February 8. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote the chapter titled "The Administrative Order" in his book "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," noting "Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated..." (was #118)

76. February 8. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The names of those cited in Bahá'u'lláh's prayer in the Dispensation are quite correct as you have them....In the prayer mentioned above Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself with Imam Husayn." (was #117)

77. February 8. On this date in 1998, the UHJ wrote Susan Stiles Maneck a detailed response regarding her questions on the relationship between "materialistic methodologies" and "doctrinal heresy" in academic fields. (was #116)

78. February 8. On this date in 2013, the UHJ announced the convocation of 95 youth conferences around the world. A few weeks later the UHJ called for 19 additional conferences, bringing the total to 114. (was #115)

79. February 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Central States" which is the 11th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan". (was #114)

80. February 8. On this date in 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote "To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World" regarding a special Two Year Plan for Eastern Europe and Asia. (was #113)

81. Passing of Glenford Mitchell (was #112)

82. February 9, 1937. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding the passage on p. 163 of the 'Gleanings': The creatures which Bahá'u'lláh states to be found on every planet cannot be considered to be necessarily similar or different from human beings on this earth." (was #111)

83. February 9. On this date in 1984, Ethel Revell died. She was a member of the International Bahá'í Council serving as both an elected and appointed member. Ethel was the daughter of Mary J. Revell, known as Mother Revell for her role in founding the Bahá'í community of Philadelphia. (was #110)

84. February 9. On this date in 1953, Kannabran Rajagopal was born. He would pioneer to Southeast Asia where he served as an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection and as a member of the NSA of Laos. (was #109)

85. February 10. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "The pilgrim's note reports the Master as saying: 'Women and men must not embrace each other when not married, or not about to be married. They must not kiss each other'...the true spirit of the teachings on the subject of sex." (was #108)

86. February 10. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote Iranian believers "...the Pen of the Centre of the Covenant has repeatedly prophesied the intolerable calamities which must beset this wayward humanity ere it heeds the life-giving Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh." (was #107)

87. February 10. On this date in 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims to Haifa from Australia and New Zealand left Melbourne, arriving in Haifa on March 13. The party consisted of Effie Baker, Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh). (was #106)

88. February 11. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í." (was #105)

89. February 11. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime..." (was #104)

90. February 11. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government "which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future...." (was #103)

91. February 11. On this date in 2004, a letter to The Guardian newspaper signed by several medical specialists was titled "Medical evidence does not support suicide by Kelly." David Kelly, a Bahá'í, was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. (was #102)

92. February 11. On this date in 1929, William Henry Randall, a former member of Baha'i Temple Unity and later named a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, died. (was #101)

93. February 11. On this date in 1960, the Custodians wrote all Hands of the Cause of God and NSAs "some highlights on the progress of the Faith, gleaned from news reaching Haifa from all over the Bahá'í world" noting "Great indeed is the power of Bahá'u'lláh!" (was #100)

94. February 11. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "When 'Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet." (was #99)

95. February 11. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh had no concubine, He had three legal wives. As He married them before the "Aqdas" (His book of laws) was revealed, He was only acting according to the laws of Islám, which had not yet been superseded." He was, in fact, a Bábí. (was #98)

96. February 11. On this date in 1941, Margaret Stevenson died. She was the first New Zealand member of the Bahá'í Faith. She served on the NSA of Australia and New Zealand from 1934 to 1939 and was in the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims to Haifa from Australia and New Zealand. (was #97)

97. February 12. On this date in 1990, the UHJ announced the "Establishment of the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace" at the University of Maryland, which they called the "first initiative by a well-founded, significant institution of higher learning to formulate such a serious program of Bahá'í studies." (was #96)

98. February 12. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society where he stated "everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and ...." (was #95)

99. February 12. On this date in 1956, on this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining that "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order.. (was #94)

100. February 12. On this date in 1980 Hasan Balyuzi, Hand of the Cause of God, died in London after suffering a stroke. (was #93)

101. February 13. On this date in 1913, 'Abdul Bahá addressed the Paris Theosophical Society, telling them that "The world of creation has had no beginning and will have no end." (was #92)

102. February 13. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that the North American Bahá'í Community may yet emerge triumphant over the prevailing crisis..dauntless valor and heroic self-sacrifice, and vindicate its right to primacy in the world community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh." (was #91)

103. February 13. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer." (was #90)

104. February 13. On this date in 1926, August Rudd, the first Swedish Bahá'í pioneer, died. (was #89)

105. February 14. On this date in 2009, one of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Istanbul, Turkey. (was #88)

106. February 14. On this date in 1957, the foundation stone of the first Bahá'í House of Worship of Africa, designed by Charles Mason Remey, was laid in Kampala, Uganda. Enoch Olinga, named a Hand of the Cause of God later that year, was present for the ceremony. (was #87)

107. February 14. On this date in 1910, Ola Pawlowska was born in Łąkta, Poland. Later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to St. Pierre and Miquelon, she died on April 2, 2004, in Newfoundland. (was #86)

108. Baha'i History - February 14. On this date in 1876, Keith Ransom-Kehler was born. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God, she died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, for which she is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr. (was #85)

109. February 14. On this date in 2005, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article about Mongolia noting "In classes like this, children learn songs, stories, and quotations that teach them spiritual and moral values...part of a curriculum developed by the Ruhi Institute..." (was #84)

110. February 14. On this date in 1972, with one year left in the Nine Year Plan of the Third Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era, the NSA of the U.S. addressed a letter "urging American Bahá'ís, one and all, newly enrolled and believers of long standing, to arise, put their reliance in .... (was #83)

111. February 15. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Western States." which is the 12th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan". (was #82)

112. February 15. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "he would like in the European languages to have as much uniformity with the English translations as possible." Bahá'í works are translated into the world's languages from English versions, not the original Arabic or Persian. (was #81)

113. February 15. On this date in 1782, William Miller was born. He predicted that Christ would return to the Earth. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events. (was #80)

114. February 15. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi noted the Haziratu'l-Quds "is an administrative headquarters. No doubt in the future it will be used for purely administrative purposes, but for the time being it must fill the role of being a true Centre and rallying-point for the Bahá'í Community. (was #79)

115. February 15. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi responded to questions concerning the historical accuracy of statements by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá', admitting that "We have no historical proof of the truth of the Master's statement regarding the Greek philosophers visiting the Holy Land." (was #78)

116. February 15. On this date in 2017, Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs published "A Discussion with Joy Mboya, Executive Director of the Godown Arts Centre." Joy Mboya is from a prominent Kenyan Bahá'í family, as well as a leader in the field of the arts. (was #77)

117. February 15. On this date in 1891, Edward Granville Brown gave a lecture at the South Place Institute in London, this being the first public lecture on the Bahá'í Faith in the West. He is best known to modern Bahá'ís for his description of his meeting with Bahá'u'lláh. (was #76)

118. February 16. On this date in 1998, the UHJ wrote about Huqúqu'lláh stating "You have asked as to where and how the House of Justice reports on its uses of the funds received through payment of Huqúqu'lláh. The House of Justice does not issue an accounting of the current expenditure of these funds. (was #75)

119. February 16. On this date in 1899 Hermann Grossmann, later a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Rosario, Argentina to a German family. When he was ten years old his family returned to Germany, and Grossmann would become an enthusiastic Bahá'í after serving in the German army in World War I. (was #74)

120. February 17. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies." (was #73)

121. February 17. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...the settlement of Persian Bahá'ís in Germany and Austria...where a large number of Persian Bahá'ís have settled, your Assembly should discuss the subject with them, and urge them to move to goal cities, where there are no Bahá'ís..." (was #72)

122. February 17. On this date in 1958, three months after the death of Shoghi Effendi, the Custodians addressed a letter to "the Hands of the Faith and the Members of the National Spiritual Assembly" of the U.S. expressing that they were "very distressed" at their use of the term "A New Bahá'í Era" (was #71)

123. February 17. On this date in 1941, Hyde Dunn died in Sydney. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1952, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn were the first Bahá'ís in Australia and among the earliest Bahá'ís in New Zealand. (was #70)

124. February 17. On this date in 2000, Mildred Mottahedeh died in New York City. She served as the first representative of the Bahá'í community at the United Nations, an Auxiliary Board member, and as an elected member of the International Bahá'í Council. (was #69)

125. February 18. On this date in 1912, "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "..the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times... Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan ... and still being thorough going Bahis." (was #68)

126. February 18. On this date in 2003, an Assembly wrote the UHJ about plans to join protests against the war in Iraq. The UHJ replied that while "purported to be a peace campaign, it is obvious that the occasion is motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil ..." (was #67)

127. February 18. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Perhaps the greatest test Bahá'ís are ever subjected to is from each other; but for the sake of the Master they should be ever ready to overlook each other's mistakes, apologize for harsh words they have uttered, forgive and forget." (was #66)

128. February 18. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice published a compilation titled "Family Life" (was #65)

129. February 18. On this date in 1970, the UHJ sent a letter to all NSAs announcing the Bahá'í International Community's attainment of consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, noting "devoted support Bahá'í communities throughout world finally rewarded." (was #64)

130. February 19. On this date in 1995, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice about a citation from Shoghi Effendi using the phrase "Bahá'í theocracy," inquiring about the development of a Bahá'í theocracy and the separation of Church and State. (was #63)

131. February 19. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them..abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian." (was #62)

132. February 19. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer explained that "The Number Nine is Reverenced for Two Reasons by Bahá'ís." (was #61)

133. February 19. On this date in 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í. (was #60)

134. February 19. On this date in 1922, Helen Goodall, Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, passed away. In 1908 she had made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908." (was #59)

135. February 20. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith...the dominating purpose of such a collaboration which is to secure in time the recognition by those with whom they are associated...the Bahá'í Revelation... (was #58)

136. February 20. On this date in 1990, Jalál Kháḍih, a Hand of the Cause of God who had served as a Custodian and previously on the NSA of Iran, died in Toronto, Canada. (was #57)

137. February 20. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote an Assembly inquiring "about the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace. It is important to keep in mind that while these activities are generally carried out in the name of peace, such occasions are motivated by ..." (was #56)

138. February 20. On this date in 1936, Percy Woodcock, an early Canadian Bahá'í who served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity (the precursor to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of United States and Canada), died in Montreal. (was #55)

139. February 21. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Baku, Azerbaijan, and another in Accra, Ghana. (was #54)

140. February 21. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi cabled the Bahá'ís of the UK, warning "owing to his brother's secession (from the) Faith, adherence (to) Islam, participation (in) politics, and association with his other brothers and mother who have flagrantly disobeyed Master's Will ..." (was #53)

141. February 21. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Tablet of Joseph does not refer to Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith we do not consider a Prophet, minor or otherwise. Certainly no references he made would have foretold the coming of this Revelation in his capacity as a Prophet." (was #52)

142. February 21. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi clarified that "Bahá'u'lláh never revealed a Tablet to the President of the U.S.A. In His Book the Aqdas He revealed words addressed to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas, but no single Tablet was ever revealed to any one of them." (was #51)

143. February 21. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations, that they have not the capability to hearken to the call of the Kingdom of God, that the veil of bigotry has ..." (was #50)

144. February 21. On this date in 1852, Isabella D. Brittingham was born. An early American Bahá'í, she converted after attending a course of "Truth Seeker" classes taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in New York City in 1898. She was posthumously named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi. (was #49)

145. February 21. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá’ís of Canada and Greenland," which is the 13th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan". (was #48)

146. February 22. On this date 2011 Dale Husband posted a blog entry title "My Resignation from the Baha’i Faith." (was #47)

147. February 22. On this date in 2009, the Universal House of Justice explained "why such terms as “Alla´h-u-Abha´” and “Ya´ Baha´’u’l-Abha´” are used by Baha´’i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues." (was #46)

148. February 22. On this date in 1948, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum entered this item into her diary: "We know Bahá'u'lláh will watch over us. But being human we have our moments of anxiety...then we just know it's up to Bahá'u'lláh..." (was #45)

149. February 22. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Indeed when we see the increasing darkness in the world today we can fully realize that unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches into the hearts of men and transforms them, there can be no peace and no spiritual progress in the future." (was #44)

150. February 22. On this date in 1847, Thornton Chase was born. Chase converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1894 after attending lessons taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in Chicago. Although not the first Bahá'í convert chronologically, Thornton Chase was the first the remain a Bahá'í and is ... (was #43)

151. February 23. On this date in 1940, Sadhij Nassar, Bahá'u'lláh's granddaughter through his son Badí'ullah, was released after having been the the first woman arrested under the British Defense Emergency Regulations. Shoghi Effendi accused her of "ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism." (was #42)

152. February 23. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...what is truly authoritative are the words of the Master. In all such cases we should try and find out what He has said and abide by His words, even though they seem in conflict with the findings of modern scholars." (was #41)

153. February 23. On this date in 1975, Ramona Allen Brown died in La Jolla, California. In 1904 she converted to the Bahá'í Faith and in 1954 made a Bahá'í pilgrimage during which Shoghi Effendi told her "Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home." (was #40)

154. February 23. On this date in 1924, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter "To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America," later published in "Bahá'í Administration," addressing such issues as "The Plight of Mankind" and "The New World Order." (was #39)

155. February 23. On this date in 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine. This event was reported in "Star of the West" magazine. (was #38)

156. February 24. On this date in 1927, Douglas Martin, who would serve on the Universal House of Justice from 1993 until his retirement in 2005, was born in Ontario, Canada. In 2000, Juan Cole wrote "A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice" (was #37)

157. February 24. On this date in 1958, the NSA of the U.S. and the American Hands of the Cause of God wrote the Custodians about "problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing." (was #36)

158. February 24. On this date in 1995, the International Teaching Centre addressed a letter to a Continental Board of Counsellors wherein it was stated "Participation by enemies of the Faith or members of Covenant-breaker groups may, indeed, occur in the dialogue on electronic forums. It is not ..." (was #35)

159. February 24. On this date in 2003, the NSA of the U.K. wrote British Bahá'ís to "exercise extreme caution in any active involvement in demonstrations" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq adding "Bahá'ís may wish to consider channelling their energies into more positive actions, particularly those ... (was #34)

160. February 24. On this date in 2005, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States filed a complaint with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center against the Second International Bahá'í Council on the use of the domain uhj.net. The complaint was denied on May 8, 2005. (was #33)

161. February 25. On this date in 1976, the UHJ wrote that "A Bahá'í deprived of his voting rights cannot be married in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony; a Bahá'í in good standing cannot marry a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights; the marriage of a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights does not fall..." (was #32)

162. February 25. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter regarding major objectives and national goals of the Six Year Plan. (was #31)

163. February 25. On this date in 1922, the text of Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament was received in New York, addressed by Shoghi Effendi to "The Beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States of America and Canada." (was #30)

164. February 25. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter marking the publication of "Who is Writing the Future?", which was published to mark the end of the 20th Century. (was #29)

165. February 25. On this date in 2003, an article in the Tribune titled "Mixed messages: With a nation divided on the need for war with Iraq, how do religious leaders address the subject? Or should they at all?" quoted "Evanston's Bahai community" as saying "mankind needs this kind of thing to learn." (was #28)

166. February 25. On this date in 2001, The Tennessean newspaper's Dining In column featured an article titled "Flavors Provide Persian Excursion Aram Ferdowsi's Use Of Spices, Attention To Tradition Yields Soulful Dining Experience" featuring the Ferdowsi family of Brentwood, Tennessee. (was #27)

167. February 25. On this date in 1889, the British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne gave a lecture to Pembroke College Literary Society, during which the Bahá'í Faith was discussed at length. This talk qualifies as the earliest mention of the Bahá'í Faith in the West. (was #26)

168. February 25. On this date in 1958, Horace Holley, a Hand of the Cause of God, wrote the Custodians about "problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing." Horace Holley himself became a Custodian in 1959. (was #25)

169. February 25. On this date in 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." (was #24)

170. February 26. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote about Huqúqu'lláh that "The devoted believer who is privileged to pay "the right of God", far from seeking excuses for evading this spiritual obligation, will do his utmost to meet it." (was #23)

171. February 26. On this date in 1953, Marguerite Sears arrived in Haifa for her Bahá'í Pilgrimage, during which she recorded Shoghi Effendi as making a number of historical, political, and theological observations as well as his making predictions for the the immediate future. (was #22)

172. February 26. On this date in 2011, James Nelson, a judge who served in the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1977 to 1999, died. (was #21)

173. February 26. On this date, the Bahá'í calendar marks the start of the intercalary days known as Ayyám-i-Há. (was #20)

174. February 26. On this date in 1986, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States explained the stipulations for wedding ceremonies "when a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í." (was #19)

175. February 26. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Australian NSA "What is important now, is for the Temple to be built. Your Assembly should study what the Master said about the influence of the Temple in America. Just exactly the same influence will be manifest in Australia." (was #18)

176. February 26. On this date in 1955,Shoghi Effendi "said the Guardian was not only infallible from the standpoint of interpretation of the Writings but he was infallible in whatever he declared himself to be infallible - that was the very nature of infallibility - that he knew when he was infallible. (was #17)

177. February 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi commented on atomic weapons and a "prophecy in the Tablets about there being a strange and wonderful instrument in the world that had the power to infect the atmosphere of the whole earth." (was #16)

178. February 26. On this date, the Bahá'í calendar marks the start of the intercalary days known as Ayyám-i-Há. (was #15)

179. February 27. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published in "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," wherein he stated "Not only will the present day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers ..." (was #14)

180. February 27. On this date in 2013, The Guardian newspaper carried an article titled "Bahá'í student expelled from Iranian university 'on grounds of religion'" (was #13)

181. February 27. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Auguste Forel, the Swiss scientist and eugenicist. Forel International School, a Bahá'í-inspired school located in Bratislava, Slovakia, was named after him. (was #12)

182. February 27. On this date in 1983, the New York Times carried an article titled "Iran's Baha'is: Some Call it Genocide." (was #11)

183. February 28. On this date in 2009, the last among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Kiev, Ukraine. (was #10)

184. February 28. On this date in 1912, an article in the "SFO Daily News" stated "... the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. ... Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" (was #9)

185. February 28. On this date in 1942, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a "Bahá'í Sister" in the United Kingdom referred to another Bahá'í, stating that "Regarding ..., Shoghi Effendi is writing him direct, advising him to sever his membership in the Synagogue." (was #8)

186. February 28. On this date in 1988, Douglas Martin wrote a preface to the 1999 re-publishing of Shoghi Effendi's "Messages to Canada" which is a compilation of letters written to Canadian Bahá'ís from 1948 to 1957. Douglas Martin served on NSA of Canada from 1960 to 1985, when he was appointed ... (was #7)

187. February 28. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding the use of the Master's film, the greatest care must be exercised lest we cheapen its value by too frequent and indiscriminate exhibition either amongst the believers or the non-Bahá'ís. Only on special occasions, such as ..." (was #6)

188. February 28. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The inscription upon the Bahá'í ringstone is the symbol of the Greatest Name, Baha, who is the Manifestation of the essence of God. It is also symbolic of the three planes representing the World of God, the World of Revelation and the World.. (was #5)

189. February 28. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "Advise you to suspend magazine for next two years. Appeal on my behalf to subscribers in East and West to devote their subscription fee to Temple Fund. Owing to present emergency such action would be highly meritorious." (was #4)

190. February 29. On this date in 1996, Iain S. Palin of the UK Bahá'í Information Office wrote a letter titled "The Mahrami Case - What it is and Why it Matter" about the case of Dhabihu'llah (also rendered Zabihullah or Zabihollah) Mahrami. (was #3)

191. February 29. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote "The House of Justice regards the need to educate and guide women in their primary responsibility as mothers as an excellent opportunity for organizing women's activities....Women should also be encouraged to attract their husbands...to the Faith..." (was #2)

192. February 29. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi named seven individuals to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God, including Músá Banání, Corinne True, Clara Dunn, Shu'á'u'lláh ʻAlá'í, Dhikru'lláh Khádim, Adelbert Mühlschlegel, and Siegried Schopflocher. (was #1)

February 1. On this date in 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings..."

Original file: 0231.html (position #192)

February 1. On this date in 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

> *Persian translation of Arabic verses*
>
> *Universal House of Justice*

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

1 February 2018

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 7 November 2014 about the translation of the Arabic Writings into Persian. It has considered your questions regarding this matter and has instructed us to write to you as follows. The delay in doing so is deeply regretted.

That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted. *In his letters to believers in Iran, Shoghi Effendi also exhorted the friends to recite the Obligatory Prayers in Arabic. However, drawing upon an individual's translation of these Prayers or other Tablets in order to aid one's understanding is, of course, permissible, although such personal translations should not be recited in Bahá'í gatherings. No issue should be made of what individuals do in private prayer.*

Latitude has likewise been given to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others — for instance, in the context of a study group. Further, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.

In light of a number of factors, Tajik and Persian are for practical purposes treated differently.

It is hoped that the above information will be of assistance. You may rest assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

Comments

February 1. On this date in 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

Original file: 0230.html (position #191)

February 1. On this date in 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

> *Persian translation of Arabic verses*
>
> *Universal House of Justice*
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> *Transmitted by email*

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>
> *1 February 2018*
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> *Latitude has likewise been given to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others — for instance, in the context of a study group. Further, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.*
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Comments

February 1. On this date in 1898, George Jacob Augur arrived in Hawaii. An early American Bahá'í who converted in Hawaii, he was the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Japan and was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.

Original file: 0229.html (position #190)

February 1. On this date in 1898, George Jacob Augur arrived in Hawaii. An early American Bahá'í who converted in Hawaii, he was the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Japan and was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.

George Jacob Augur was born on October 1, 1853, to Abraham Augur, a farmer, and Ellen Morris in West Haven Connecticut. He attended Hopkins Grammar School, then Yale Preparatory School, and then studied at Yale University Medical College from 1876 to 1879. After graduating he worked at New Haven State Hospital until 1882, when he moved to Oakland, California where he worked as an allopathic physician until 1895 when he began practicing homeopathy, alienating him from the medical community.

He married Ruth Barstow Dyer in 1892 and they had a son, Morris Curtis, who was born March 1, 1894. In 1898 the family relocated to Honolulu, Hawaii, where George opened a

practice. Ruth's sister who also lived in Honolulu became a Bahá'í in 1905, and George and Ruth also declared between 1907 and 1909 and began holding weekly meetings to teach the Faith in their home. George began correspondence with 'Abdu'l-Bahá after declaring and received six letters from him receiving the first in 1909. George became Treasurer of the Honolulu Bahá'í community in 1911.

In 1913 George wrote that he wished to go to Japan to 'Abdu'l-Bahá having spent time there on a holiday with Ruth in 1906. He received the following Tablet in reply:

> *"O thou dear son! From thy letter the fragrance of the rose garden of significances was inhaled, that praise be to God, thou art assisted by the Divine confirmations, hast found the way to the Kingdom of God and thy heart and soul are quickened. Arise thou to perform the blessed intention thou art holding and travel thou to Japan and lay there the foundation of the Cause of God, that is, summon the people to the Kingdom of God. Japan has great capacity, but there needs be a teacher who will speak by the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. I hope thou wilt become assisted in this."*

He lived in Japan from June 1914 to April 1915, and returned in early 1916 with his wife and lived in Zushi until 1917. They returned to Japan a final time in 1918 and stayed there until returning to Honolulu in 1919. The Augurs continued to host meetings in their home in Honolulu from 1919 to 1927 when they moved to a beach apartment in Waikiki.

Augur died due to a stroke on September 13, 1927, and was buried in Oahu Cemetery in Honolulu. Shoghi Effendi conveyed the following message after his death:

> *"He was deeply grieved to hear of the death of Dr. Augur. He prays that in seeking eternal rest, his soul may soar to heavenly kingdoms and attain an everlasting bounty. Surely he is now where he would much love to be. Please convey to his family Shoghi Effendi's deepest sympathy and regret."*

Here is an article about George Jacob Augur from The Bahá'í Encyclopedia Project.

Comments

February 1. On this date in 1921, Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, the first Bahá’í to permanently settle in Brazil and the "Spiritual Mother of the Bahá’ís of Latin America," arrived in Rio de Janeiro. She would die in 1980 in Bahia. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously linked the name "Bahia" to "Bahai".

Original file: 0228.html (position #189)

February 1. On this date in 1921, Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, the first Bahá’í to permanently settle in Brazil and the "Spiritual Mother of the Bahá’ís of Latin America," arrived in Rio de Janeiro. She would die in Salvador, Bahia some 60 years later, in 1980. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously linked the name "Bahia" to "Bahai".

Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, was born in Hudson, New York, on June 23, 1895. She arrived in Rio de Janeiro on February 1, 1921, becoming the first Bahá’í to permanently

settle in Brazil. She would earn the titled "Spiritual Mother of the Bahá'ís of Latin America."

On October 17, 1980, Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, died in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously linked the name "Bahia" to "Bahai".

On April 8, 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada*, which is the 6th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in the garden adjacent to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918. The *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada* refers to the city of Bahia.

> *In a similar way, the republics of the continent of South America—Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela; also the islands to the north, east and west of South America, such as Falkland Islands, the Galapagòs, Juan Fernandez, Tobago and Trinidad.* ***Likewise the city of Bahia, situated on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because it is some time that it has become known by this name, its efficacy will be most potent.***

Comments

February 1. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... of the Cause that you can appreciate the real message that Bahá'u'lláh has brought to the world. Only then would you see how incomplete and futile is the work of the other societies and movements that at present exist in the world."

Original file: 0227.html (position #188)

February 1. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer stating: "Besides the friends should arrange proper study classes and deepen their knowledge of the teachings. It is only through such thorough understanding of the literature of the Cause that you can appreciate the real message that Bahá'u'lláh has brought to the world. Only then would you see how incomplete and futile is the work of the other societies and movements that at present exist in the world."

Comments

February 1. On this date in 1968, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "...Bahá'u'lláh's statement that the consent of all living parents is required for marriage...whether they be Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, the parents' decision is binding, whatever the reason that may have motivated it."

Original file: 0226.html (position #187)

February 1. On this date in 1968, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "It is perfectly true that Bahá'u'lláh's statement that the consent of all living parents is required for marriage places a grave responsibility on each parent. When the parents are Bahá'ís they should, of course, act objectively in withholding or granting their approval. They cannot evade this responsibility by merely acquiescing in their child's wish, nor should they be swayed by prejudice; but, whether they be Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, the parents' decision is binding, whatever the reason that may have motivated it."

1237. Consent of All Living Parents Places a Grave Responsibility on Each Parent

"It is perfectly true that Bahá'u'lláh's statement that the consent of all living parents is required for marriage places a grave responsibility on each parent. When the parents are Bahá'ís they should, of course, act objectively in withholding or granting their approval. They cannot evade this responsibility by merely acquiescing in their child's wish, nor should they be swayed by prejudice; but, whether they be Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, the parents' decision is binding, whatever the reason that may have motivated it. Children must recognize and understand that this act of consenting is the duty of a parent. They must have respect in their hearts for those who have given them life, and whose good pleasure they must at all times strive to win."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, February 1, 1968)

Comments

February 2. On this date in 1984, the Bahá'í International Community provided a nine page commentary on two documents circulated by the Government of Iran, including one listing "Bahá'ís (or alleged Bahá'ís) who are identified as having held high office under the Shah."

Original file: 0225.html (position #186)

February 2. On this date in 1984, the Bahá'í International Community provided a nine page commentary on two documents circulated by the Government of Iran, including a booklet titled "Bahaism: Its Origins and Its Role" another document titled "Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Review of the Facts" which lists "Bahá'ís (or alleged Bahá'ís) who are identified as having held high office under the Shah."

Comments

February 2. On this date in 1849, Mullá Husayn-i-Bushru'i, the first believer in the Báb, died in the Battle of Fort Tabarsi. Being the first believer in the Báb, Mullá Husayn-i-Bushru'i was the first Letter of the Living, being titled Jináb-i Bábu'l-Báb ("Gate of the Gate").

Original file: 0224.html (position #185)

February 2. On this date in 1849, Mullá Husayn-i-Bushru'i, the first believer in the Báb, died in the Battle of Fort Tabarsi during the Bábí uprisings. Being the first believer in the Báb, Mullá Husayn-i-Bushru'i was the first Letter of the Living, being titled Jináb-i Bábu'l-Báb ("Gate of the Gate").

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated.

Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings.

Under instructions from the Báb, on July 21, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at thebattle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.

Comments

February 2. On this date in 2001, Rose Perkal died. An American Bahá'í who served on the NSA of Alaska, she was named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Kodiak Islands. She later pioneered to South Africa and served on the its NSA. She also established the Bahá'í Faith in the Bantustan of Ciskei.

Original file: 0223.html (position #184)

February 2. On this date in 2001, Rose Perkal died. An American Bahá'í who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, she was named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Kodiak Islands. She later pioneered to South Africa and served on the its National Spiritual Assembly. She also established the Bahá'í Faith in the Bantustan of Ciskei.

Rose Perkal Grosnoff was born April 13, 1904 in New York into a Russian-Jewish household were she grew up speaking Yiddish. She became a Baha’i in 1948. In response to

the call for Bahá'ís to settle in remote areas during the Ten Year Crusade, Rose pioneered in 1953 from New York to the Kodiak Islands in Alaska, for which she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Shortly after her arrival to the Kodiak Islands on July 8, 1953, she wrote the following:

> *God is good to me and I am grateful for having the opportunity of being able to serve the Cause in such clean, progressive surroundings . . . At first one may be a little dismayed as I was when I first came in, but then as one looks around with the eyes of a Bahá'í, he sees a wonderful future for this lovely island . . . When one begins to investigate, there are great possibilities for not only the person seeking to do business but also for a wonderful Bahá'í Community . . . There is beauty here. The ruggedness of Maine, hills, green foliage, high grass, islands . . . The more I am amazed at the insight and knowledge the Guardian has in selecting these posts. Everything here is rugged, but already you can see the growth of a modern town – a new civilization.*

Rose Perkal lived in the Kodiak Islands for one year, and moved to Anchorage in September 1954. She moved from Anchorage to Hamilton Acres, just outside Fairbanks, to help establish a Local Spiritual Assembly and was elected as corresponding secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Fairbanks when it was established in 1955. She married Ken Yarno around this time. By 1956 she had moved to the Tanana Valley, and was elected to the Tanana Valley Local Spiritual Assembly as secretary when it was established in April 1956. She was elected to the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska when it was established in 1957 and served on the body until 1959.

In 1960 she moved to Switzerland, answering a call for pioneers, and helped establish a Local Spiritual Assembly in Locarno in 1961. In 1966 she moved to California, and by 1967 she was the Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Southern California. She pioneered to Capetown, South Africa in 1969, briefly visiting the Dominican Republic en route, and was appointed as the Secretary of the South African National Teaching Committee. In late 1970 she established the Bahá'í Faith in the Bantustan of Ciskei, converting a woman in East London who helped her teach in surrounding villages. She married George Gates while in South Africa and they settled in East London.

Rose was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa in 1973, and served on it until 1985. In 1978 she visited Haifa as a delegate of the South African Assembly to the

International Convention. During the 1970's she was in a serious car accident, had her identification stolen, and her husband George died, but she remained at her pioneer post. She attended the establishment of an independent National Spiritual Assembly of Ciskei in 1985. She returned to the United States in 1985 at the request of her children, but planned to pioneer to Dominica in 1986. While visiting her son in California on her way to Dominica it was decided that she needed nursing home care and she remained in California for the rest of her life. She died in Anaheim, California on February 2, 2001, at the age of 96, and was buried at Fairhaven Memorial Park.

Comments

February 2. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The world is seeking as never before, and if the friends will arise with new determination, fully consecrated to the noble task ahead of them, victory after victory will be won for the Glorious Faith of God."

Original file: 0222.html (position #183)

February 2. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) "The Hosts of the Supreme Concourse are in marshall array, poised between Earth and Heaven ready to rush to the assistance of those who arise to Teach the Faith. If one seeks the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, they can find it in rich abundance in the Teaching Field. The world is seeking as never before, and if the Friends will arise with new determination, fully consecrated to the noble task ahead of them victory after victory will be won for the Glorious Faith of God."

> *The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Anchorage Recording District.*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friends:*
>
> *Your loving letter of January 9th has been received by the Beloved Guardian, and*

> *he has directed me to acknowledge it on his behalf. The contribution which you have sent to the International Fund is greatly appreciated. Receipt is enclosed herein.*
>
> ***The Hosts of the Supreme Concourse are in marshall array, poised between Earth and Heaven ready to rush to the assistance of those who arise to Teach the Faith. If one seeks the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, they can find it in rich abundance in the Teaching Field. The world is seeking as never before, and if the Friends will arise with new determination, fully consecrated to the noble task ahead of them victory after victory will be won for the Glorious Faith of God.***
>
> *The Guardian will pray for the quickening of the teaching work in Alaska. A great upward surge is essential in that great country, as it is soon to have its own National Assembly. May the Friends arise with resolve, dedication and consecration. Then surely great results will be achieved. The Guardian sends you his loving Greetings.*
>
> *Faithfully yours,*
>
> *Leroy Ioas*

Also here...

> *The Hosts of the Supreme Concourse are in martial array, posed between earth and heaven ready to rush to the assistance of those who arise and teach the Faith. If one seeks the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, one can find it in rich abundance in the teaching field. The world is seeking as never before, and if the friends will arise with new determination, fully consecrated to the noble task ahead of them, victory after victory will be won for the Glorious Faith of God.*
>
> *(From a letter dated February 2, 1956 to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Anchorage Recording District)*

Comments

February 2. On this date in 1941, Marina Núñez del Prado, a celebrated sculptor, became the first Bolivian Bahá’í. She did not remain active, however, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar, who became a Bahá’í on May 18, 1941, is recognized as the first Bahá’í in Bolivia.

Original file: 0221.html (position #182)

February 2. On this date in 1941, Marina Núñez del Prado, a celebrated sculptor, became the first Bolivian Bahá’í. She did not remain active, however, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar, who became a Bahá’í on May 18, 1941, is recognized as the first Bahá’í in Bolivia. A French woman married to Arturo Cuellar Echazu, a Bolivian army officer, Yvonne Cuellar was titled the "Mother of Bolivia" by Shoghi Effendi.

Born in France on March 11, 1896, Yvonne Cuellar and her husband, Arturo Cuellar, lived in La Paz, Bolivia, in the 1940s where they had an American boarder, Eleanor Adler, who was first Bahá’í pioneer to Bolivia. Both she and her husband became Bahá’ís and helped establish the first Baha'i community of La Paz. May 18. On this date in 1941, Yvonne

Liegois Cuellar became a Bahá'í on May 18, 1941. Although Marina del Prado was the first Bolivian to become a Bahá'í, on February 2, 1941, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. Shoghi Effendi called her the "Mother of Bolivia". Arturo Cuellar would later become a Bahá'í in 1946 through his wife's efforts.

In 1953, the Cuellars moved to the United States but returned to Bolivia in 1956 at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of that country. In 1958 she traveled to France to help establish the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly, which was dissolved two years later through reports of Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi by the authority of the Custodians due to a majority of the Assembly's acceptance of Charles Mason Remey's claim to being the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith subsequent to the death of Shoghi Effendi.

In 1968 the Cuellars once again moved to the United States. Yvonne Cullear died in Littleton, Colorado in December 1983.

Comments

mikeigartua: SK

February 2. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "The signs of the promised revival of your sorely-tried Fatherland can now be easily discerned. In material prosperity it is steadily advancing, its power and worldly prestige are being fast regained...."

Original file: 0220.html (position #181)

February 2. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "The signs of the promised revival of your sorely-tried Fatherland can now be easily discerned. In material prosperity it is steadily advancing, its power and worldly prestige are being fast regained, and above all the dawn of a spiritual awakening, unparalleled in your history, seems at last to have broken upon it. His sure and often repeated promise will erelong be fulfilled."

2 February 1925

To my well-beloved Bahá'í brethren and sisters throughout Germany. Care of the German National Spiritual Assembly. Loyal and capable children of our beloved `Abdu'l-Bahá!

I have received with the greatest pleasure from the National Spiritual Assembly, through our dearly-beloved Consul Schwarz, the report of your activities that reflect so vividly the unquenchable spirit of love and self-sacrifice which animates you in your service for the Beloved's Cause. Your unremitting labours are worthy of the highest praise, the success you have so far achieved is well deserved. The refreshing vitality of your work, the unity of purpose and the concerted action attained recently by your fast-growing community are resplendent features of your activity. They continually remind us of the Master's intense love for you, His high hopes in you, His often expressed admiration for the ardent devotion, the unquestioned sincerity, the unrivalled capacity of His loved ones in Germany. By what you have already accomplished, and by what you are determined to achieve in times to come, you have merited His abundant blessings and proved in the highest sense worthy of the unsurpassed affection He had for you.

The signs of the promised revival of your sorely-tried Fatherland can now be easily discerned. In material prosperity it is steadily advancing, its power and worldly prestige are being fast regained, and above all the dawn of a spiritual awakening, unparalleled in your history, seems at last to have broken upon it. His sure and often repeated promise will erelong be fulfilled.

Let your National Assembly, therefore, redouble its efforts, inaugurate a fresh campaign of ever-expanding activity, and make a solemn determination not to relax till their one aim is attained. Let them, with the full and sustained support, moral as well as financial, of the vast company of the believers throughout your land, send forth their teachers far and wide, that they may scatter to the very confines of Germany and endeavour by every intelligent and effective method to lend a fresh impetus to the newly-established centres, add to their number, satisfy their needs and coordinate their efforts.

Let him who desires to hasten the advent of the day when all Germany will waken to the recognition of this one Message of Universal Salvation arise to contribute his share to the work, so gloriously begun, so effectively pursued. Let him by his

written and spoken word, in private as well as in public, in the course of his travels and in his association with all sorts and conditions of men teach the Cause of God with purity of heart, with unflinching determination and complete understanding.

I assure you, dear friends, we shall all remember you most tenderly, most affectionately, whenever we visit the Three Holy Shrines. We will supplicate for you the aid and assistance from on high. We will implore Him Who loved you most dearly to bless you even more richly than before, shield you from the malice of the ungodly, bind you closer one to the other, deepen your faith, clarify your vision, widen the scope of your activities, and reinforce your noble endeavours.

We all love you, we all pray for you, we all await the joyful tidings of your land.

Your true brother

Comments

Key_Mammoth365: seems like he did not expect world war 2 or the global depression. /

February 2. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "...above all the dawn of a spiritual awakening, unparalleled in your history, seems at last to have broken upon it. His sure and often repeated promise will erelong be fulfilled."

Original file: 0219.html (position #180)

February 2. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "The signs of the promised revival of your sorely-tried Fatherland can now be easily discerned. In material prosperity it is steadily advancing, its power and worldly prestige are being fast regained, and above all the dawn of a spiritual awakening, unparalleled in your history, seems at last to have broken upon it. His sure and often repeated promise will erelong be fulfilled."

> *2 February 1925*
>
> *To my well-beloved Bahá'í brethren and sisters throughout Germany. Care of the German National Spiritual Assembly. Loyal and capable children of our beloved `Abdu'l-Bahá!*

I have received with the greatest pleasure from the National Spiritual Assembly, through our dearly-beloved Consul Schwarz, the report of your activities that reflect so vividly the unquenchable spirit of love and self-sacrifice which animates you in your service for the Beloved's Cause. Your unremitting labours are worthy of the highest praise, the success you have so far achieved is well deserved. The refreshing vitality of your work, the unity of purpose and the concerted action attained recently by your fast-growing community are resplendent features of your activity. They continually remind us of the Master's intense love for you, His high hopes in you, His often expressed admiration for the ardent devotion, the unquestioned sincerity, the unrivalled capacity of His loved ones in Germany. By what you have already accomplished, and by what you are determined to achieve in times to come, you have merited His abundant blessings and proved in the highest sense worthy of the unsurpassed affection He had for you.

The signs of the promised revival of your sorely-tried Fatherland can now be easily discerned. In material prosperity it is steadily advancing, its power and worldly prestige are being fast regained, and above all the dawn of a spiritual awakening, unparalleled in your history, seems at last to have broken upon it. His sure and often repeated promise will erelong be fulfilled.

Let your National Assembly, therefore, redouble its efforts, inaugurate a fresh campaign of ever-expanding activity, and make a solemn determination not to relax till their one aim is attained. Let them, with the full and sustained support, moral as well as financial, of the vast company of the believers throughout your land, send forth their teachers far and wide, that they may scatter to the very confines of Germany and endeavour by every intelligent and effective method to lend a fresh impetus to the newly-established centres, add to their number, satisfy their needs and coordinate their efforts.

Let him who desires to hasten the advent of the day when all Germany will waken to the recognition of this one Message of Universal Salvation arise to contribute his share to the work, so gloriously begun, so effectively pursued. Let him by his written and spoken word, in private as well as in public, in the course of his travels and in his association with all sorts and conditions of men teach the Cause of God with purity of heart, with unflinching determination and complete understanding.

I assure you, dear friends, we shall all remember you most tenderly, most affectionately, whenever we visit the Three Holy Shrines. We will supplicate for

> *you the aid and assistance from on high. We will implore Him Who loved you most dearly to bless you even more richly than before, shield you from the malice of the ungodly, bind you closer one to the other, deepen your faith, clarify your vision, widen the scope of your activities, and reinforce your noble endeavours.*
>
> *We all love you, we all pray for you, we all await the joyful tidings of your land.*
>
> *Your true brother*

Comments

February 2. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern States", which is the 9th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

February 2. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern States*, which is the 9th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in Ismá'íl Áqá's room at the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the nine Northeastern States of the United States: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> *He is God!*
>
> *O ye real friends:*

ALL countries, in the estimation of the one true God, are but one country, and all cities and villages are on an equal footing. Neither holds distinction over another. All of them are the fields of God and the habitation of the souls of men. Through faith and certitude, and the precedence achieved by one over another, however, the dweller conferreth honor upon the dwelling, some of the countries achieve distinction, and attain a preeminent position. For instance, notwithstanding that some of the countries of Europe and of America are distinguished by, and surpass other countries in, the salubrity of their climate, the wholesomeness of their water, and the charm of their mountains, plains and prairies, yet Palestine became the glory of all nations inasmuch as all the holy and divine Manifestations, from the time of Abraham until the appearance of the Seal of the Prophets (Muḥammad), have lived in, or migrated to, or traveled through, that country. Likewise, Mecca and Medina have achieved illimitable glory, as the light of Prophethood shone forth therein. For this reason Palestine and Ḥijáz have been distinguished from all other countries.

Likewise, the continent of America is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide and the free assemble. Therefore, every section thereof is blessed: but because these nine states have been favored in faith and assurance, hence through this precedence they have obtained spiritual privilege. *They must realize the value of this bounty; because they have obtained such a favor and in order to render thanksgiving for this most great bestowal, they must arise in the diffusion of divine fragrances so that the blessed verse of the Qur'án, "God is the light of heaven and earth: the similitude of His light is a niche in a wall, wherein a lamp is placed, and the lamp enclosed in a case of glass; the glass appears as if it were a shining star. It is lighted with the oil of a Blessed Tree, an olive neither of the East, nor of the West; it wanteth little but that the oil thereof would give light, although no fire touched it. This is the light added unto light. God will direct unto His light whom He pleaseth" 1 —may be realized.*

He says: The world of nature is the world of darkness, because it is the origin of a thousand depravities; 63 nay, rather, it is darkness upon darkness. The illumination of the world of nature is dependent upon the splendor of the Sun of Reality. The grace of guidance is like unto the candle which is enkindled in the glass of knowledge and wisdom and that glass of knowledge and wisdom is the mirror of the heart of humanity. The oil of that luminous lamp is from the fruits of

the Blessed Tree and that oil is so refined that it will burn without light. When the intensity of the light and the translucency of the glass and the purity of the mirror are brought together, it will become light upon light.

In brief, in these nine blessed states 'Abdu'l-Bahá journeyed and traveled from place to place, explained the wisdom of the heavenly books and diffused the fragrances. In most of these states he founded the divine Edifice and opened the door of teaching. In those states he sowed pure seeds and planted blessed trees.

Now the believers of God and the maidservants of the Merciful must irrigate these fields and with the utmost power engage themselves in the cultivation of these heavenly plantations so that the seeds may grow and develop, prosperity and blessing be realized and many rich and great harvests be gathered in.

The Kingdom of God is like unto a farmer who comes into possession of a piece of pure and virgin soil. Heavenly seeds are scattered therein, the clouds of divine providence pour down and the rays of the Sun of Reality shine forth.

Now all these bounties exist and appear in full in these nine states. The divine Gardener passed by that 64 holy ground and scattered pure seeds from the lordly teachings in that field; the rain of the bounties of God poured down and the heat of the Sun of Reality—that is, the merciful confirmations—shone with the utmost splendor. It is my hope that each one of those blessed souls may become a peerless and unique irrigator and the East and the West of America may become like unto a delectable paradise so that all of you may hear from the Supreme Concourse the cry of "Blessed are you, and again blessed are you!"

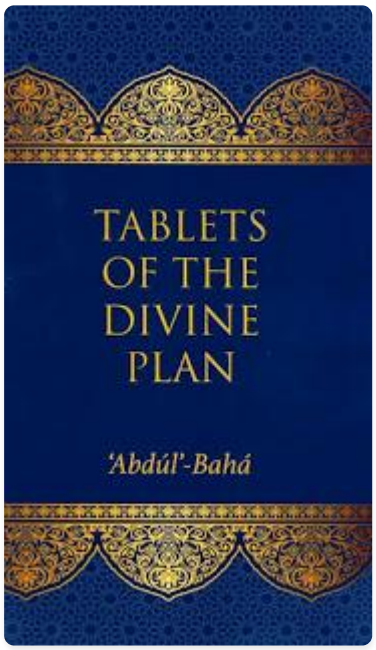
Upon you be greeting and praise!

The following supplication is to be read by the teachers and friends daily:

> *O THOU kind Lord! Praise be unto Thee that Thou hast shown us the highway of guidance, opened the doors of the kingdom and manifested Thyself through the Sun of Reality. To the blind Thou hast given sight; to the deaf Thou hast granted hearing; Thou hast resuscitated the dead; Thou hast enriched the poor; Thou hast shown the way to those who have gone astray; Thou hast led those with parched lips to the fountain of guidance; Thou hast suffered the thirsty fish to reach the ocean of reality; and Thou hast invited the wandering birds to the rose garden of grace.*

> *O Thou Almighty! We are Thy servants and Thy poor ones; we are remote and yearn for Thy presence, are athirst for the water of Thy fountain, are ill, longing for Thy healing. We are walking in Thy path and have 65 no aim or hope save the diffusion of Thy fragrance, so that all souls may raise the cry: O God, "Guide us to the straight path." 2 May their eyes be opened to behold the light, and may they be freed from the darkness of ignorance. May they gather around the lamp of Thy guidance. May every portionless one receive a share. May the deprived become the confidants of Thy mysteries.*
>
> *O Almighty! Look upon us with the glance of mercifulness. Grant us heavenly confirmation. Bestow upon us the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be assisted in Thy service and, like unto brilliant stars, shine in these regions with the light of Thy guidance.*
>
> *Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Wise and the Seeing.*

1. *Qur'án 24:35.*
2. *Qur'án 1:6.*



Comments

February 3. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "In English translations of the Sacred Bahá'í Writings personal pronouns referring to the Manifestations of God or to 'Abdu'l-Bahá should invariably be capitalized."

Original file: 0217.html (position #178)

February 3. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "In English translations of the Sacred Bahá'í Writings personal pronouns referring to the Manifestations of God or to 'Abdu'l-Bahá should invariably be capitalized; in the Guardian's writings in English his own style must be followed. Capitalization of pronouns relating to the Manifestations of God and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in introductory books or books about the Faith in the English language is left to the personal choice of the author."

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> *books or books about the Faith in the English language is left to the personal choice of the author. (3 February 1975)*

Comments

February 3. On this date in 1969, Harold Thomas Fitzner died. He was a member and Chairman of the NSA of Australia and New Zealand and a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Portugese Timor. He was also involved in the publication of the Australian Bahá'í periodical Herald of the South.

February 3. On this date in 1969, Harold Thomas Fitzner died. He was a member and Chairman of the NSA of Australia and New Zealand and a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Portugese Timor. He was also involved in the publication of the Australian Bahá'í periodical Herald of the South.

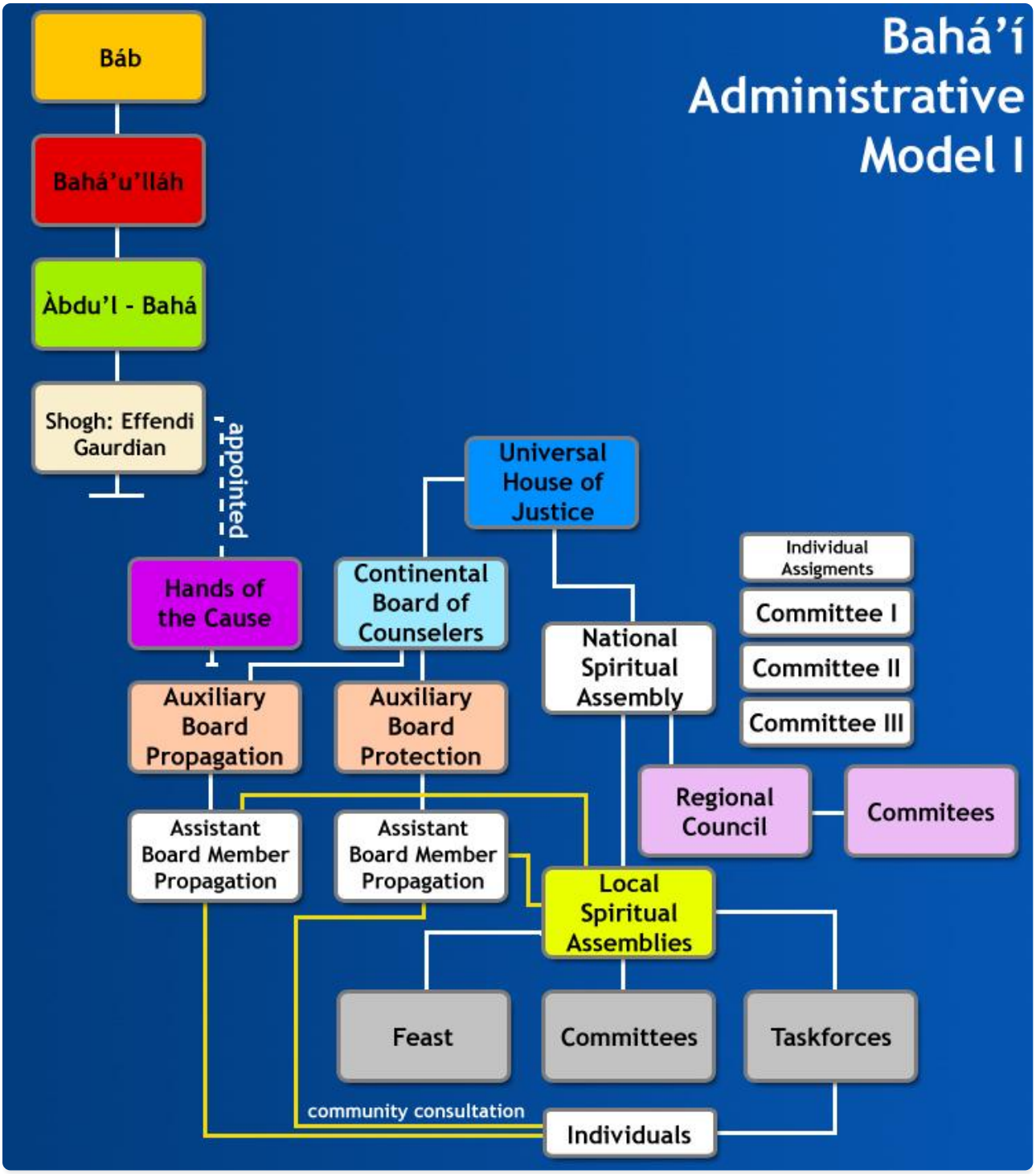
Comments

February 3. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There can be no protection for the Faith unless the friends are willing to submit to their administrative bodies, especially when these are acting in good faith; and the individual believers are not in a position to judge their National Body."

Original file: 0215.html (position #176)

February 3. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There can be no protection for the Faith unless the friends are willing to submit to their administrative bodies, especially when these are acting in good faith; and the individual believers are not in a position to judge their National Body. If any wrong has been done, we must leave it in the hands of God, knowing, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, that He will right it..."

> *He appreciates your spirit of devotion to the Faith, but he feels that you, your husband and ... should comply with the instructions of the National Spiritual Assembly. There can be no protection for the Faith unless the friends are willing to submit to their administrative bodies, especially when these are acting in good faith; and the individual believers are not in a position to judge their National Body. If any wrong has been done, we must leave it in the hands of God, knowing, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, that He will right it, and in the mean time not disrupt the Cause of God by constantly harping on these matters.*
>
> *(From a letter dated 3 February 1957 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)*


Bahá'í Administrative Model I
Báb
Bahá'u'lláh
Àbdu'l - Bahá
Shogh: Effendi Gaurdian
appointed
Universal House of Justice
Hands of the Cause
Continental Board of Counselers
National Spiritual Assembly
Individual Assigments
Committee I
Committee II
Committee III
Auxiliary Board Propagation
Auxiliary Board Protection
Regional Council
Commitees
Assistant Board Member Propagation
Assistant Board Member Propagation
Local Spiritual Assemblies
Feast
Committees
Taskforces
community consultation
Individuals

Comments

February 3. On this date in 1958, the Custodians cabled the American Hands of the Cause of God "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

Original file: 0214.html (position #175)

February 3. On this date in 1958, the Custodians cabled the American Hands of the Cause of God "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

> *AMERICAN HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CARE BAHA'I WILMETTE*
>
> *FEBRUARY 3,1958*
>
> *CUSTODIANS SERIOUSLY DISTURBED STATEMENT A NEW BAHA'I ERA*

ISSUED AMERICAN HANDS NSA INTERPRETING ADDING Bahji, PROCLAMATION CONSIDER THIS GRAVE DANGER UNITY FAITH URGE DELETE ALL REFERENCE DOOR APPOINTMENT SECOND GUARDIAN CLOSED RIGHT NINE EXPEL COVENANT BREAKERS STOP STATEMENTS THIS NATURE CAN BE MADE ONLY ENTIRE BODY HANDS AS CHIEF STEWARDS AND NOT BY ANY NSA OR GROUP HANDS STOP THIS STATEMENT NOT YET RECEIVED BY CUSTODIANS BUT EXCERPTS FORWARDED HERE WITH PROTESTS STOP SUGGEST FOCUS ATTENTION RELEASE FIRST INTERCONTINENTAL CONFERENCE FORESHADOWING INSPIRING SUCCESS FOUR REMAINING CONFERENCES GREAT RALLYING POINTS CREATED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AID BELIEVERS ADJUST TO SITUATION REMAIN FIRM COVENANT CONCENTRATE TASKS FIVE REMAINING YEARS CRUSADE STOP REQUEST ALL CORRESPONDENCE FOR HANDS HOLY LAND ADDRESSED THEM DIRECTLY NOT TO INDIVIDUAL.

[CABLE]

HANDSFAITH

Comments

February 3. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The crisis that exists in the world is not confined to the farmers....The present and perhaps the near future is dark, but we have the wonderful promises of the Master before us and they shall all become true...."

Original file: 0213.html (position #174)

February 3. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The crisis that exists in the world is not confined to the farmers. Its effects have reached every means of livelihood. The farmers are in a sense better off because they at least have food to eat....In short it is forcing humanity to appreciate the significance and follow the precepts laid by Bahá'u'lláh. The present and perhaps the near future is dark, but we have the wonderful promises of the Master before us and they shall all become true...."

> *436. The Crisis is Serving a Great Purpose*

> *"The crisis that exists in the world is not confined to the farmers. Its effects have reached every means of livelihood. The farmers are in a sense better off because they at least have food to eat. But on the whole the crisis is serving a great purpose. It is broadening the outlook of man, teaching him to think internationally, forcing him to take into consideration the welfare of his neighbours if he wishes to improve his own condition. In short it is forcing humanity to appreciate the significance and follow the precepts laid by Bahá'u'lláh. The present and perhaps the near future is dark, but we have the wonderful promises of the Master before us and they shall all become true...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 3, 1932)*

Comments

February 3. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "For Bahá'u'lláh has promised His Divine assistance to everyone who arises with a pure and detached heart to spread His holy Word, even though he may be bereft of every human knowledge and capacity, and notwithstanding the forces of darkness..

Original file: 0212.html (position #173)

February 3. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "For Bahá'u'lláh has promised His Divine assistance to everyone who arises with a pure and detached heart to spread His holy Word, even though he may be bereft of every human knowledge and capacity, and notwithstanding the forces of darkness and of opposition which may be arrayed against

him."

> *1960. Even if Bereft of Every Human Knowledge, Everyone Who with a Pure, Detached Heart Arises to Serve His Cause is Promised Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Assistance*
>
> *"...Do not feel discouraged if your labours do not always yield an abundant fruitage. For a quick and rapidly-won success is not always the best and the most lasting. The harder you strive to attain your goal, the greater will be the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, and the more certain you can feel to attain success. Be cheerful, therefore, and exert yourself with full faith and confidence. For Bahá'u'lláh has promised His Divine assistance to everyone who arises with a pure and detached heart to spread His holy Word, even though he may be bereft of every human knowledge and capacity, and notwithstanding the forces of darkness and of opposition which may be arrayed against him. The goal is clear, the path safe and certain, and the assurances of Bahá'u'lláh as to the eventual success of our efforts quite emphatic. Let us keep firm, and whole-heartedly carry on the great work which He has entrusted into our hands."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 3, 1937)*

Comments

February 3. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As to teaching work in colleges and universities, this is very important, for students as a whole are open-minded and little influenced by tradition. They would easily enter the Cause if the subject is properly presented and their intellect..

Original file: 0211.html (position #172)

February 3. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As to teaching work in colleges and universities, this is very important, for students as a whole are open-minded and little influenced by tradition. They would easily enter the Cause if the subject is properly presented and their intellect and sentiments properly satisfied. This, however, should be attempted only by persons who have had university training and are, therefore, acquainted with the mind of the intelligent and educated youth..."

720. Teaching in Universities and Colleges

"As to teaching work in colleges and universities, this is very important, for students as a whole are open-minded and little influenced by tradition. They would easily enter the Cause if the subject is properly presented and their intellect and sentiments properly satisfied. This, however, should be attempted only by persons who have had university training and are, therefore, acquainted with the mind of the intelligent and educated youth..."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 3, 1932)

Comments

February 3. On this date in 2016, the Research Department addressed a memo to the Universal House of Justice regarding an alleged Iranian census of Bahá'ís "to have been conducted by the Greatest Holy Leaf around the time of the passing of 'Abdu’l-Bahá"

Original file: 0210.html (position #171)

February 3. On this date in 2016, the Research Department addressed a memo to the Universal House of Justice regarding an alleged Iranian census of Bahá'ís "to have been conducted by the Greatest Holy Leaf around the time of the passing of 'Abdu’l-Bahá"

> *M E M O R A N D U M*
>
> *To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 3 February 2016*
>
> *From: Research Department*

Early Bahá'í Census

It has been brought to the attention of the Research Department that statements have been made on Internet discussion sites claiming that ... had found a census of the Bahá'ís in Iran in the course of research done in the Bahá'í World Centre Archives. This census is alleged to have been conducted by the Greatest Holy Leaf around the time of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to have shown that there were one million Bahá'ís in that country at the time. The Research Department has studied this issue and offers the following response.

We have found no evidence of a census of the Bahá'ís in Iran having been requested or carried out by the Greatest Holy Leaf around the time of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

However, very early in his ministry, Shoghi Effendi made the taking of a reliable census a feature of the rise of the Administrative Order throughout the world. A few months after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he asked the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of 8ihrán to appoint a committee that would correspond with Bahá'í centres throughout the country in order to determine the number of believers in each locality.

Similar instructions were sent to other Spiritual Assemblies around the same time. In a letter dated 12 March 1923 to the Bahá'ís of America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia1, Shoghi Effendi discussed at length the purposes and functions of the National Spiritual Assembly. He provided, in an enclosure, a list of the number of delegates assigned to various Bahá'í localities in America as an illustration of the principles governing the election of delegates and stated that the numbers, which had been compiled a year previously, should be readjusted before the next annual Convention based on a revised and up-to-date census.

Letters written over subsequent years followed the progress of the census and emphasized that the preparation of an accurate and complete census was one of the prerequisites of the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran. Shoghi Effendi continued to remind and encourage the friends in Iran to carry out the census, until the National Assembly was finally elected in 1934.

Among the holdings of the Archives at the World Centre are a series of papers

relating to censuses that were undertaken during that period. These documents indicate that there were several tens of thousands of Bahá'ís registered in Iran's formal statistics in the 1920s and early 1930s, although a note, dated 19 Diy 1310 [10 January 1932], states that, because of the lack of means, the census does not include all the Bahá'ís in Iran but only those that the various administrative divisions have been able to register. The next readily available figure for registered Bahá'ís in Iran is the estimated number of 300,000 which was obtained in the late 1970s.

The much larger numbers claimed in the early days of the Faith by certain orientalists, diplomats, and even Bahá'ís themselves may be attributed to the fervour created among the populace by the teachings of the new Manifestation. *Lord Curzon, for example, wrote in 1892 that "the lowest estimate places the present number of Babis in Persia at half a million," but that he is disposed to think, "from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million."*

In reality, it is impossible to state precisely how many among the population of Iran were ready to be formally recognized as Bahá'ís in the very early days of the Faith; in any case, believers were not registered at that time and no systematic census was taken before the ones carried out at the Guardian's instruction.

Comments

February 3. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Souther States", which is the 10th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

February 3. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Southern States*, which is the 10th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in Ismá'íl Áqá's room at the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the sixteen Southern States of the United States: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> *O ye blessed, respected souls:*
>
> *THE philosophers of the ancients, the thinkers of the Middle Ages and the scientists*

of this and the former centuries have all agreed upon the fact that ***the best and the most ideal region for the habitation of man is the temperate zone, for in this belt the intellects and thoughts rise to the highest stage of maturity, and the capability and ability of civilization manifest themselves in full efflorescence****. When you read history critically and with a penetrating eye, it becomes evident that the majority of the famous men have been born, reared and have done their work in the temperate zone, while very, very few have appeared from the torrid and frigid zones.*

Now these sixteen Southern States of the United States are situated in the temperate zone, and in these regions the perfections of the world of nature have been fully revealed. For the moderation of the weather, the beauty of the scenery and the geographical configuration of the country display a great effect in the world of minds and thoughts. This fact is well demonstrated through observation and experience.

Even the holy, divine Manifestations have had a nature in the utmost equilibrium, the health and wholesomeness of their bodies most perfect, their constitutions endowed with physical vigor, their powers functioning in perfect order, and the outward sensations linked with the inward perceptions, working together with extraordinary momentum and coordination.

Therefore in these sixteen states, because they are contiguous to other states and their climate being in the utmost of moderation, unquestionably the divine teachings must reveal themselves with a brighter effulgence, the breaths of the Holy Spirit must display a penetrating intensity, the ocean of the love of God must be stirred with higher waves, the breezes of the rose garden of the divine love be wafted with higher velocity, and the fragrances of holiness be diffused with swiftness and rapidity

Praise be to God that the divine outpourings are infinite, the melody of the lordly principles is in the utmost efficacy, the most great Orb shining with perfect splendor, the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse are attacking with invincible power, the tongues are sharper than the swords, the hearts are more brilliant than the light of electricity, the magnanimity of the friends precedes all the magnanimities of the former and subsequent generations, the souls are divinely attracted, and the fire of the love of God is enkindled.

At this time and at this period we must avail ourselves of this most great opportunity. We must not sit inactive for one moment; we must sever ourselves from composure, rest, tranquillity, goods, property, life and attachment to material things. We must sacrifice everything to His Highness, the Possessor of existence, so that the powers of the Kingdom may show greater penetration and the brilliant effulgence in this New Cycle may illumine the worlds of minds and ideals.

It is about twenty-three years that the fragrances of God have been diffused in America, but no adequate and befitting motion has been realized, and no great acclamation and acceleration has been witnessed. Now it is my hope that through the heavenly power, the fragrances of the Merciful, the attraction of consciousness, the celestial outpourings, the heavenly cohorts and the gushing forth of the fountain of divine love, the believers of God may arise and in a short time the greatest good may unveil her countenance, the Sun of Reality may shine forth with such intensity that the darkness of the world of nature may become entirely dispelled and driven away; from every corner a most wonderful melody may be raised, the morning birds may break into such a song that the world of humanity may be quickened and moved, the solid bodies may become liquefied, and the souls who are like unto adamantine rocks may open their wings and through the heat of the love of God fly heavenward.

Nearly two thousand years ago, Armenia was enveloped with impenetrable darkness. One blessed soul from among the disciples of Christ hastened to that part, and through his effort, erelong that province became illumined. Thus it has become evident how the power of the Kingdom works!

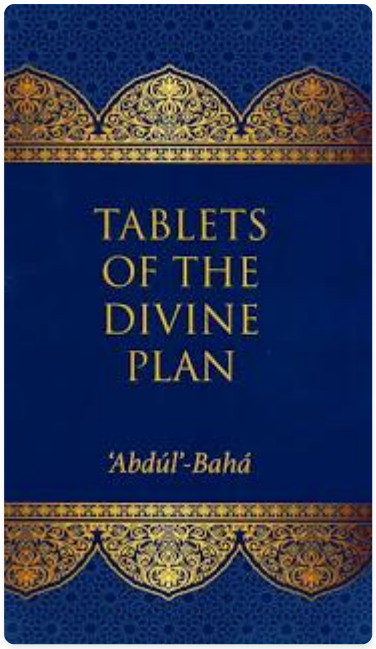
Therefore, rest ye assured in the confirmations of the Merciful and the assistance of the Most High; become ye sanctified above and purified from this world and the inhabitants thereof; suffer your intentions to work for the good of all; cut your attachment to the earth and like unto the essence of the spirit become ye light and delicate. Then with a firm resolution, a pure heart, a rejoiced spirit, and an eloquent tongue, engage your time in the promulgation of the divine principles so that the oneness of the world of humanity may pitch her canopy in the apex of America and all the nations of the world may follow the divine policy. This is certain, that the divine policy is justice and kindness toward all mankind. For all the nations of the world are the sheep of God, and God is the kind shepherd. He has created these sheep. He has protected them, sustained and trained them. What

greater kindness than this? And every moment we must render a hundred thousand thanksgivings that, praise be to God, we are freed from all the ignorant prejudices, are kind to all the sheep of God, and our utmost hope is to serve each and all, and like unto a benevolent father educate every one.

Upon you be greeting and praise!

Every soul who travels through the cities, villages and hamlets of these states and is engaged in the diffusion of the fragrances of God, should peruse this commune every morning:

> *O MY God! O my God! Thou seest me in my lowliness and weakness, occupied with the greatest undertaking, determined to raise Thy word among the masses and to spread Thy teachings among Thy peoples. How can I succeed unless Thou assist me with the breath of the Holy Spirit, help me to triumph by the hosts of Thy glorious kingdom, and shower upon me Thy confirmations, which alone can change a gnat into an eagle, a drop of water into rivers and seas, and an atom into lights and suns? O my Lord! Assist me with Thy triumphant and effective might, so that my tongue may utter Thy praises and attributes among all people and my soul overflow with the wine of Thy love and knowledge.*
>
> *Thou art the Omnipotent and the Doer of whatsoever Thou willest.*



Comments

February 4. On this date in 2021, the UHJ affirmed that "...the Bahá'í writings affirm the generally held perspective that there are two sexes, male and female. This, of course, is not in conformity with some recent social theories that divide gender into multiple types."

February 4. On this date in 2021, the Universal House of Justice affirmed that "While there are many complexities surrounding the biological issues pertaining to sex and the social issues pertaining to gender, the Bahá'í writings affirm the generally held perspective that there are two sexes, male and female. This, of course, is not in conformity with some recent social theories that divide gender into multiple types."

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1958, Horace Holley, Secretary of the NSA of the U.S., responded to a cable from the Custodians sent one day previous stating "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands....grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

Original file: 0207.html (position #168)

February 4. On this date in 1958, Horace Holley, Secretary of the NSA of the U.S., responded to a cable from the Custodians sent one day previous stating "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

> *To the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land*

February 4, 1958

Dear Friends:

In accordance with your urgent request, steps are being taken to delete from our statement "A New Bahá'í Era" the reference to the door being closed to any hope for a future second Guardian, and the passage attributing to your body the authority to expel Covenant-breakers from the Faith.

Since your cablegram arrived in between meetings of the National Assembly, this letter is only an acknowledgement of your cable and any further communications will be based on consultation of the Hands and National Assembly members.

Since you saw only excerpts from our statement, a copy of the complete statement is enclosed.

Sincerely

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

By: Horace Holley, Secretary

On February 3, 1958, the Custodians cabled the American Hands of the Cause of God "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

AMERICAN HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CARE BAHA'I WILMETTE

FEBRUARY 3,1958

CUSTODIANS SERIOUSLY DISTURBED STATEMENT A NEW BAHA'I ERA ISSUED AMERICAN HANDS NSA INTERPRETING ADDING Bahji, PROCLAMATION CONSIDER THIS GRAVE DANGER UNITY FAITH URGE DELETE ALL REFERENCE DOOR APPOINTMENT SECOND GUARDIAN CLOSED RIGHT NINE EXPEL COVENANT BREAKERS STOP STATEMENTS THIS NATURE CAN BE MADE ONLY ENTIRE BODY HANDS AS CHIEF STEWARDS AND NOT BY ANY NSA OR GROUP HANDS STOP THIS STATEMENT NOT YET RECEIVED BY CUSTODIANS BUT EXCERPTS FORWARDED HERE WITH PROTESTS STOP SUGGEST FOCUS ATTENTION RELEASE FIRST

> *INTERCONTINENTAL CONFERENCE FORESHADOWING INSPIRING SUCCESS FOUR REMAINING CONFERENCES GREAT RALLYING POINTS CREATED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AID BELIEVERS ADJUST TO SITUATION REMAIN FIRM COVENANT CONCENTRATE TASKS FIVE REMAINING YEARS CRUSADE STOP REQUEST ALL CORRESPONDENCE FOR HANDS HOLY LAND ADDRESSED THEM DIRECTLY NOT TO INDIVIDUAL.*
>
> *[CABLE]*
>
> *HANDSFAITH*

Horace Holley, as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and the New York Spiritual Assembly, had attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," which Ahmad Sohrab had founded in 1929 with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. The conflict resulted in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

Ahmad Sohrab had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter from 1912 to 1919, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley, member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and the New York Spiritual Assembly attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," ultimately resulting in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

On March 31, 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

On March 10, 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

> *To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley*

March 10, 1958

Revered Bahá'í Brother:

The Hands in the Holy Land are sending a detailed answer to the questions raised in the letter of February 24, 1958 addressed to us by the American Hands and the National Spiritual Assembly.

We believe that the points covered in our letter also meet the request made in your separate communication of February 25 to your fellow Hands in Haifa.

Here, as you know, we receive letters from all parts of the world which reflect the approach of the believers of diverse backgrounds to the ***problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing.*** *As a result, the Custodians have been made very conscious of the necessity to strive for unity in the approach to fundamental matters affecting the structure and future development of the Cause. The Custodians from East and West are aware of the wisdom of avoiding statements or points of view on basic issues which cannot be accepted equally by East and West, and indeed by all of the Bahá'í world, especially in this period, so soon after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, when* ***we are still unable to grasp the full implications of the present situation.***

It would have been a great help if you yourself could have served here in these early and critical months, and given us the benefit of your experience and clarity of thought on the many pressing issues with which we have had to cope.

You will now, we feel sure, understand our delicate position and the reasons why we felt it necessary to urge that the statement "A New Bahá'í Era" be withdrawn from circulation. *Your fellow-Hands serving here are confident you will place this whole question and its world-wide implications before the members of your National Assembly in such a way that they will fully understand the reasons underlying the actions taken here.*

No doubt when the entire body of the Hands gather at our next meeting later this year we will have many things to discuss, and each one win have a greater contribution to make in view of this tragic year's experiences.

We all send you our devoted love and assure you that you are often remembered in our prayers.

> *Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,*
>
> *HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND*

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... the reading of these with friends who are interested in and crave for this type of small meeting is often a step towards attracting them to the Faith. Perhaps you could start such an activity in your city."

Original file: 0206.html (position #167)

February 4. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As we have such wonderful prayers and meditations in our writings, the reading of these with friends who are interested in and crave for this type of small meeting is often a step towards attracting them to the Faith. Perhaps you could start such an activity in your city."

> *1973. As we have such wonderful prayers and meditations in our writings, the reading of these with friends who are interested in and crave for this type of small meeting is often a step towards attracting them to the Faith. Perhaps you could start such an activity in your city.*

(From a letter dated 4 February 1950 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "... in their heart is planted the seeds of the Bahá'í teachings which in time will germinate and bring forth wondrous fruits. All these young people when they return home will carry the Message with them..."

Original file: 0205.html (position #166)

February 4. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "... the fact that in their heart is planted the seeds of the Bahá'í teachings which in time will germinate and bring forth wondrous fruits. All these young people when they return home will carry the Message with them and even though they do not become confirmed believers, they will remain friends always ready to render a service to the Bahá'í teachers they happen to meet. Shoghi Effendi hopes you will carry on that work but at the same time try to make them true Bahá'ís--in spirit as well as in faith."

2250. The account of your work among the foreign students made Shoghi Effendi very happy. Not only will these young people get a good impression of American families and hospitality, but the spiritual training you try to give them will make their education so much more complete and worthwhile. This is beside the fact that in their heart is planted the seeds of the Bahá'í teachings which in time will germinate and bring forth wondrous fruits. All these young people when they return home will carry the Message with them and even though they do not become confirmed believers, they will remain friends always ready to render a service to the Bahá'í teachers they happen to meet. Shoghi Effendi hopes you will carry on that work but at the same time try to make them true Bahá'ís--in spirit as well as in faith.

(4 February 1932 to an individual believer)

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1915, Agnes Alexander attended attended her first Esperanto meeting in Japan. She would later write "God used this language, which came into the world through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, to spread His Message in Japan."

February 4. On this date in 1915, Agnes Alexander attended her first Esperanto meeting in Japan. She would later write "God used this language, which came into the world through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, to spread His Message in Japan."

From the "Life of Agnes Alexander" by Duane Troxel...

> *Ms. Alexander attended her first Esperanto meeting in Japan on February 4, 1915. She took along a copy of the Bahá'í Revelation in Esperanto. She later wrote of Esperanto:*

> *God used this language, which came into the world through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, to spread His Message in Japan. That night, two weeks after I had reached Tokyo, when I attended the first Esperanto meeting in Japan, was the beginning of my work in making the Bahá'í teachings known among the Esperantists of Japan. From the northern island of Hokkaido to Nagasaki in Kyushu, as well as Korea, the Message of Bahá'u'lláh was heard, for Esperanto was more widely spread in Japan than in any country outside of Russia.*

On April 25, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to Esperantists in Washington, D.C., stating "We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech."

> *Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races.* ***We***

> ***must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.***

One year later, on February 12, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society, as reported in the "Star of the West" magazine..,

> *Praise be to God, that Dr Zamenhof has created the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort, for in this matter he has served his fellowmen well. He has constructed a language which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it gives promise of universal acceptation. Therefore* ***everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto. In the future two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other the international auxiliary language.*** *Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study 50 languages and yet travel through a country and still be at a loss. I, myself, know several of the Oriental languages, but know no Western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.*
>
> ***Please send some teachers to Persia, if you can, so that they may teach Esperanto to the young people. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.***
>
> *I hope that it will be promulgated very rapidly - then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the body politic will be*

> *fully informed of the thoughts of all*

This talk was also covered in J.E. Esselmont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the chapter entitled *Universal Language*:

> *At an Esperanto banquet given in Paris in February 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:—*
>
> *Today one of the chief causes of the differences in Europe is the diversity of languages. We say this man is a German, the other is an Italian, then we meet an Englishman and then again a Frenchman. Although they belong to the same race, yet language is the greatest barrier between them. Were a universal auxiliary language in operation they would all be considered as one.*
>
> *His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this international language more than forty years ago. He says that as long as an international language is not adopted, complete union between the various sections of the world will be unrealized, for we observe that misunderstandings keep people from mutual association, and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through an international auxiliary language.*
>
> *Generally speaking, the whole people of the Orient are not fully informed of events in the West, neither can the Westerners put themselves in sympathetic touch with the Easterners; their thoughts are enclosed in a casket—the international language will be the master key to open it. Were we in possession of a universal language, the Western books could easily be translated into that language, and the Eastern peoples be informed of their contents. In the same way the books of the East could be translated into that language for the benefit of the people in the West. The greatest means of progress towards the union of East and West will be a common language. It will make the whole world one home and become the strongest impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity. It will make the earth one universal commonwealth. It will be the cause of love between the children of men. It will cause good fellowship between the various races.*
>
> ***Now, praise be to God that Dr. Zamenhof has invented the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of becoming the international means of communication. All of us must be grateful and***

> ***thankful to him for this noble effort; for in this way he has served his fellowmen well. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees Esperanto will become universal. Therefore every one of us must study this language and spread it as far as possible so that day by day it may receive a broader recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world, and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that Esperanto will be adopted as the language of all the future international conferences and congresses, so that all people need acquire only two languages—one their own tongue and the other the international language. Then perfect union will be established between all the people of the world. Consider how difficult it is today to communicate with various nations. If one studies fifty languages one may yet travel through a country and not know the language. Therefore I hope that you will make the utmost effort, so that this language of Esperanto may be widely spread.***

In the past, Bahá'ís were more active in learning and encouraging the learning of Esperanto, and the links between Esperanto and the Bahá'í Faith are numerous. Ehsan Yarshater, the ex-Bahá'í founder and editor of Encyclopedia Iranica, notes how as a child in Iran he learned and taught Esperanto and that when his mother was visiting Haifa he wrote her a letter in Persian as well as Esperanto. L.L. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia Zamenhof was a convert to the Bahá'í Faith. At the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Agnes Baldwin Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used it to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences in Japan.

Due to the failure of Esperanto to gain significant traction, however, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements have been backtracked, such that Shoghi Effendi said

> *Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that* ***while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future.*** *Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as*

> *a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.*

On August 3, 1935, a letter read "Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of [Esperanto], and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles." The letter continued "Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium."

> *3 August 1935*
>
> *He wishes me particularly to convey to you his most genuine appreciation of your services in connection with the publication of "La Nova Tago" which he hopes will, through your efforts and those of the Esperanto-speaking Bahá'ís both in Germany and abroad, develop gradually into a leading Esperanto review, and thus become an effective medium for the spread of Teachings in Esperantist circles throughout the world. It is in view of the far-reaching possibilities which this publication can have as a teaching organ, that he has urged the German N.S.A. to resume its publication when, a few months ago, they had almost decided to discontinue printing it.*
>
> *With regard to your request for a special article from the Guardian which you wish to have published in the forthcoming issue of your magazine. He would suggest that you should translate his general letter addressed to the friends a few years ago, entitled "The Goal of a New World Order", as this, he feels, is a very suitable material for publication in that review, and is by far better than anything he can write at present.*
>
> *As to your suggestion regarding a more widespread use of the Esperanto among the Bahá'ís as a medium of correspondence. Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of that language, and to consider it as an important medium for the*

> *spread of the Cause in international circles. He has been specially urging the friends to have the Cause well represented in all Esperanto Congresses and associations, and by this means cultivate greater friendship and cooperation between them and the Esperantists.*
>
> *But in this connection, he feels, he must make it clear that although the Cause views with much sympathy and appreciation the activities which the Esperantists are increasingly initiating for the spread of their language, yet it considers that the adoption of the Esperanto by the entire world is by no means an inevitable fact.* ***Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium.***

On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double*

> *crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.*

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> *Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.*

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:*
>
> > *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*
>
> *His response was decisive:*
>
> > *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*
>
> *Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:*

> > *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*
>
> *She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.*
>
> *She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.*

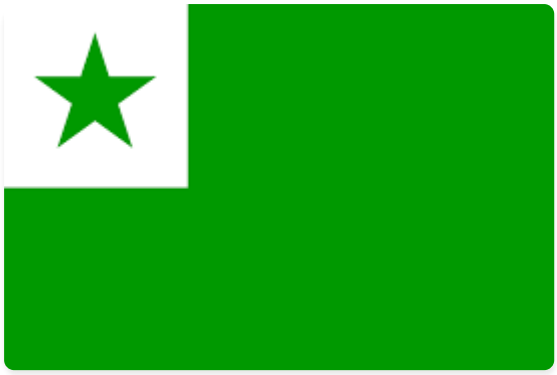
From the following section:

> *Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:*
>
> > *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where*

> *the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*
>
> *In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.*

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> *A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:*
>
> > *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*
>
> *She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.*



Comments

February 4. On this date in 1906, Kathryn Alio was born. An early American Bahá'í who pioneered to Alaska, Lesotho and Iceland, she served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska.

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Kathryn Alio was born in Columbus Ohio on February 4, 1906 as the second of six children. She cared for her younger siblings as a child. At some point she moved to Dayton where she worked as a secretary at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

She became a Bahá'í while living in Dayton by 1940 and despite being an isolated Bahá'í she remained an active member of the community, attending an inter-city Teaching Conference in Springfield in 1946. By 1949 a Local Spiritual Assembly of Dayton had been established, and Kathryn served as its Secretary.

In 1954 she left Dayton, pioneering to Fairbanks in Alaska, and moving to Anchorage shortly after arriving. She was elected to the Alaskan National Spiritual Assembly shortly after it was established and served on it until 1963. She served as editor of Alaska Bahá'í News from 1962 to 1964. In 1967 she was a member of a Proclamation Committee in Anchorage, which aimed to teach the Faith on a wide scale.

Kathryn pioneered to Lesotho in the late 1960's and wrote a report on the first Lesotho National Convention in 1971. She moved from South Africa to Iceland, and returned to Alaska during the 1970's where she worked at a department store in her old age.

In 2005 she moved to Waltham Crossings, where she lived with her sister Phyllis.

She died on September 25, 2009, at the age of 103.

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice cabled all NSAs "ANNOUNCE PURCHASE STRIP LAND GREAT NORTHERN LONDON CEMETERY FACING BELOVED GUARDIAN'S RESTING PLACE ENSURING PROTECTION SACRED PLOT. PRAYERS GRATITUDE OFFERED DIVINE THRESHOLD. UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE"

Original file: 0202.html (position #163)

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"ANNOUNCE PURCHASE STRIP LAND GREAT NORTHERN LONDON CEMETERY FACING BELOVED GUARDIAN'S RESTING PLACE ENSURING PROTECTION SACRED PLOT. PRAYERS GRATITUDE OFFERED DIVINE THRESHOLD. UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE"

> *Acquisition of Land Adjacent to the Guardian's Resting-Place in London*
>
> *4 FEBRUARY 1975*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *ANNOUNCE PURCHASE STRIP LAND GREAT NORTHERN LONDON CEMETERY FACING BELOVED GUARDIAN'S RESTING PLACE ENSURING PROTECTION SACRED PLOT. PRAYERS GRATITUDE OFFERED DIVINE THRESHOLD. UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE*

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1974, Charles Mason Remey died. Mason Remey was a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian. An architect, he designed the Ugandan and Australian Bahá′í Temples.

Original file: 0201.html (position #162)

February 4. On this date in 1974, Charles Mason Remey died. Charles Mason Remey was an early and active Bahá'í who, along with Howard C. Struven, became the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause of God, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian&oldid=745828715). An architect, he designed the Ugandan and Australian Bahá′í Temples. Upon the request of Shoghi Effendi, he also provided designs for a Bahá′í House of Worship in Tehran, for Haifa, and the Shrine of

'Abdu'l-Bahá, however only the Haifa temple was approved before the death of Shoghi Effendi.

Mason Remey based his claim to be the second Guardian&oldid=745828715) of the Bahá'í Faith on the idea that by appointing him as President of the International Bahá'í Council, the embryonic form of the Universal House of Justice which would be led by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi had in fact implicitly named him as the second Guardian. Mason Remey's claim was largely rejected with several notable exceptions, including five members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France led by Joel Marangella. The remaining 26 Hands of the Cause unanimously declared Remey and whoever followed him Covenant-breakers.

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote Australian Bahá'ís "no such directions" regarding "the best way to make their investments secure during the coming world crisis."

Original file: 0200.html (position #161)

February 4. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote Australian Bahá'ís "no such directions" regarding "the best way to make their investments secure during the coming world crisis."

> *4 February 1937 [National Spiritual Assembly] Dear Miss Brooks,*
>
> *I am instructed by the Guardian to inform you of the receipt of your letter of the 2nd January, and of the enclosed reports of the Adelaide and Auckland Spiritual Assemblies, and to renew to you, and through you to your fellow-members in the N.S.A., his grateful appreciation of the warm welcome you have so lovingly extended to that dear and distinguished servant of the Cause Mr. Siegfried Schopflocher during his visit to Australia and New Zealand. It is his fervent hope that the spirit his visit has released will long serve to sustain the friends in their heavy task of expanding the foundations of the Administrative Order throughout that continent.*
>
> *Regarding Mr. Bolton's question as to whether the Guardian has given any*

instructions to the friends as to ***the best way to make their investments secure during the coming world crisis; I am instructed to inform you that no such directions have been given either to any individual believer or to any Assembly.*** *The only advice which the Guardian wishes to give is that whatever investment the friends make they should do it with the utmost caution, as economic and financial conditions are at present most unstable and even precarious.*

Shoghi Effendi has been very deeply grieved to learn of Mr. Inman's resignation from both the N.S.A. and the Sydney Local Assembly, and of his request to leave altogether the Cause. He wishes me, however, to assure your Assembly not to feel discouraged at this truly sad happening, but to confidently strive to bring him back into the community. Should he persistently refuse to return, the best thing would be to leave him to himself, and to pray for him that Bahá'u'lláh may, in His infinite mercy and love, open again his eyes, and lead him out of the state of spiritual lethargy into which he has so sadly fallen.

With the assurance of the Guardian's best wishes, and of his continual prayers for you, and for your distinguished fellow-members in the N.S.A.,

Yours Sincerely in His Service,

H. Rabbani.

Dear and prized co-worker:

I am delighted with the progress of your activities and with your splendid achievements in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í service. The National Spiritual Assembly is laying a firm and unassailable foundations for the administrative order of the Faith, and I wish to congratulate all its members and committees on the marvellous progress thus far achieved. I will continue to pray for them from all my heart. I will specially supplicate for the success of this coming convention. May your hopes be fulfilled in every respect. Gratefully and affectionately, Shoghi.

FINANCES
VALORIZATION
GDP
CALCULATION
ANALYST
CURRENCY
ECONOMICS
DEAL
MONEY
CAPM
WORLD
LAW
ECONOMY
ECONOMIC
PROFIT
LEASING
CLOSING
QUOTE
CHECK
BUDGET
INFLATION
CLOSING
CALCULATION
BARTER
QUOTE
BACKING
DVP
CURRENCY
ENFORCEMENT
NETTING
INDUSTRY
ACCOUNT
REVENUE
SCIENCE
DEPOSIT
BACKING
SCIENCE

Comments

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Born Mahvash Shahriyari on February 4, 1953 in Ardestan, Mahvash Sabet moved to Tehran when she was in the fifth grade. In university, she studied psychology, obtaining a bachelor's degree.

She began her professional career as a teacher and also worked as a principal at several schools. In her professional role, she also collaborated with the National Literacy Committee of Iran. After the Islamic revolution, however, she was fired from her job and blocked from working in public education.

After her termination from public education, she became director of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, where she also has taught psychology and management.

She married Siyvash Sabet on May 21, 1973. They have a son, Foroud Sabet, and a daughter, Negar Sabet, both born in Hamadan.

While all of the other Yaran were arrested at their homes in Tehran on May 14, 2008, Mahvash Sabet was arrested in Mashhad on March 5, 2008, where she had been summoned by the Ministry of Intelligence.

Sabet was released from Evin prison on September 18, 2017.

While in prison, Sabet wrote a number of poems. These were eventually adapted by Bahiyyih Nakhjavani from translations into English from the original Persian completed by Violette and Ali Nakhjavani. These English adaptations were published by George Ronald in 2013.

On October 10, 2017, Mahvash Sabet was named 2017 International Writer of Courage by PEN International and co-winner of the annual Pinter Prize.

Comments

February 4. On this date in 1910, during his trip around the world with Howard C. Struven, Charles Mason Remey addressed a letter to the Bahá'í Assembly of Washington, DC from Rangoon, Burma, which was later published in the "Star of the West" magazine.

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Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven were the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause of God, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian.

LETTER FROM MR. REMEY

RANGOON, BURMAH, FEBRUARY 4, 1910.

To the Bahai Assembly of

Washington, D. C., U. S. A.

DEAR BAHAI FRIENDS: — Since writing you last from Honolulu, our Bahai brother, Howard Struven, and I, have attained to this point on our line of travel, having visited Japan, and some of the Chinese ports, as well as Singapore, on our way here to Rangoon.

We arrived here about ten days ago; the intervening time has sped past very quickly. Being quartered in the Mashrak-el-Azkar, we are receiving believers and truth-seekers from a very early to a very late hour. Many are coming to inquire about the Teachings, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Moslems, Buddhists and Brahmans or Hindoos. We find that the general knowledge which we had of these latter-mentioned religions is very scanty, so we have been studying and preparing ourselves to meet the questions of the people of these divers creeds. This to the Bahai is not so difficult a task as one might at first imagine, as in their purity each of these religions of the world was of divine origin, so now that the Bahais have the spiritual understanding or key to all religions, they are all explained from one spiritual standpoint. The one spiritual explanation satisfies the seeking soul from whatever religion he may come. Thus do we see the power and the spiritual potency of the Truth.

In Japan we spent six days with Prof. M. Barakatullah in Tokyo, where he had gathered quite a group of truth-seekers from both the foreigners living in Tokyo as well as from the Japanese people. Enclosed I send you a copy of a notice in Japanese which was circulated, inviting people to a large Bahai Meeting held in the Y. M. C. A. Auditorium in Tokyo. We had a well-attended meeting, which immediately placed us in touch with a great many people. Other meetings were held and we met many personally, so that the time in Tokyo passed rapidly. After visiting Yokahoma, Kobe, Kyoto and Nagasaki, we passed over into China, where in Shanghai we met with a most devoted Bahai brother from Persia who lives there, Mirza Abdul Badhi — Mirza Ahmad knows him. Though our visit in Shanghai was not long, we met several people who were deeply in sympathy with

our work. We could have remained there indefinitely and had plenty of work to do in the Cause, but we felt that we should be pressing on here where the call is more urgent, and besides we wish to complete our tour of India before the excessive heat sets in, for during the cool weather now on we have the best opportunity to meet people.

Of the work here in Burmah I will write later on in a general letter. Now I will make a brief mention of the work in Japan. There the field is ready, and what is most encouraging is that the thinkers and leaders of Japan realize this. Many are looking about for a religion suited to the needs of the Japanese people. Now is, I feel, the time for the Bahais to direct their energies toward Japan.

American Bahais are needed in Japan. If all of the people will carry this in their minds, someone may hear and respond to this call from the far East. Teachers are needed also in China, particularly in Shanghai, for there the Cause is somewhat known, and a good beginning could easily be accomplished.

In these Eastern countries there are excellent business opportunities open to young men. Several energetic young Bahai brothers from America could do a great work in Japan, China or here, and at the same time be establishing themselves and doing well in business.

I trust the time may soon come when Bahai workers from the West may come to these fields, for their services are needed.

Please extend our Bahai greeting from both to all. The friends here join us.

Yours in His Holy Cause,

Charles Mason Remey

Comments

February 5. On this date in 1986, the UHJ addressed a letter to all NSAs to clarify confusion generated by a letter written on "2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’í’s of the world" regarding the definitions of various "epochs" and "Ages."

Original file: 0197.html (position #158)

February 5. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "to all National Spiritual Assemblies" to clarify confusion generated by a letter written on "2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’í’s of the world" regarding the definitions of various "epochs" and "Ages."

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*

5 February 1986

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

In the letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'í's of the world, reference was made to the inception of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. In response to questions subsequently put to the House of Justice about the periods related to the earlier epochs of that Age, the Research Department was requested to prepare a statement on the subject. This has now been presented, and a copy is enclosed.

Kindly share this material of topical interest with the friends, as you deem fit, so that it may be studied in their deepening classes, summer schools, conferences and similar gatherings.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Epochs of the Formative Age

Prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice

Introduction:

In disclosing the panoramic vision of the unfoldment of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi refers to three major evolutionary stages through which the Faith must pass—the Apostolic or Heroic Age (1844–1921) associated with the Central Figures of the Faith; the Formative or Transitional Age (1921–), the "hallmark" of which is the rise and establishment of the Administrative Order, based on the execution of the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament; and, the Golden Age which will represent the "consummation of this glorious Dispensation." Close examination of the details of Bahá'í history reveals that the individual Ages are comprised of a number of periods—inseparable parts of one integrated whole.

In relation to the Heroic Age of our Faith, the Guardian, in a letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís, specified that this Age consisted of three epochs and described the distinguishing features of each:

> *... the Apostolic and Heroic Age of our Faith, fell into three distinct epochs, of nine, of thirty-nine and of twenty-nine years' duration, associated respectively with the Bábí Dispensation and the ministries of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This primitive Age of the Bahá'í Era, unapproached in spiritual fecundity by any period associated with the mission of the Founder of any previous Dispensation, was impregnated, from its inception to its termination, with the creative energies generated through the advent of two independent Manifestations and the establishment of a Covenant unique in the spiritual annals of mankind.*

The Formative Age, in which we now live and serve, was ushered in with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Its major thrust is the shaping, development and consolidation of the local, national and international institutions of the Faith. It is clear from the enumeration of the tasks associated with the Formative Age that their achievement will require increasingly mature levels of functioning of the Bahá'í community:

> *During this Formative Age of the Faith, and in the course of present and succeeding epochs, the last and crowning stage in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the election of the Universal House of Justice—will have been completed, the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas," the Mother Book of His Revelation, will have been codified and its laws promulgated, the Lesser Peace will have been established, the unity of mankind will have been achieved and its maturity attained, the Plan conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá will have been executed, the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious orthodoxy will have been effected, and its independent religious status will have been universally recognized, ...*

The epochs of the Formative Age mark progressive stages in the evolution of the organic Bahá'í community and signal the maturation of its institutions, thus enabling the Faith to operate at new levels and to initiate new functions. The timing of each epoch is designated by the Head of the Faith, and given the organic nature of evolutionary development, the transition from one epoch to another may not be abrupt, but may well occur over a period of time. This is the case, for

example, in relation to both the inception of the Formative Age and the end of its first epoch. In relation to the former, the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the transitional event most often identified with the close of the Heroic Age and the beginning of the Formative Age. However, the Guardian also asserts that the Apostolic Age of the Faith concluded "more particularly with the passing [in 1932] of His well-beloved and illustrious sister, the Most Exalted Leaf—the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age." With regard to the termination of the first epoch of the Formative Age, Shoghi Effendi has placed this between the years 1944 and 1946.

Before describing the individual epochs of the Formative Age, it is important to comment on the use of the term "epoch" in the writings of the Guardian. In a letter dated 18 January 1953, written on his behalf to a National Spiritual Assembly, it is explained that the term is used to apply both to the stages in the Formative Age of the Faith, and to the phases in the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. We are currently in the fourth—epoch of the Formative Age and the second epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. (The first epoch of the Divine Plan began in 1937, with the inception of the First Seven Year Plan of the North American Bahá'í community, and concluded with the successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963. The second epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan commenced in 1964 with the inauguration of the Nine Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice.)

The primary focus of this statement is on the epochs of the Formative Age of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

The First Epoch of the Formative Age: 1921–1944/46

The first epoch of this Age witnessed the "birth and the primary stages in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith." The epoch was characterized by concentration on the formation of local and national institutions in all five continents, thereby initiating the erection of the machinery necessary for future systematic teaching activities. This epoch was further marked by the launching, at the instigation of the Guardian, of the First Seven Year Plan (1937–1944) by the American Bahá'í community. This Plan, drawing its inspiration from the Tablets of the Divine Plan, represented the first systematic teaching campaign of the Bahá'í community and inaugurated the initial stage of the execution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan in the Western Hemisphere.

The Second Epoch of the Formative Age: 1946–1963

This epoch extended the developments of the first epoch by calling for the "consummation of a laboriously constructed Administrative Order," and was to witness the formulation of a succession of teaching plans designed to facilitate the development of the Faith beyond the confines of the Western Hemisphere and the continent of Europe. This epoch was distinguished, in the first instance, by the simultaneous and often spontaneous prosecution of Bahá'í national plans in both the East and the West. For example, in a letter written at Naw-Rúz 105 [1949] to the Bahá'ís in the East, the beloved Guardian listed the specific plans undertaken by the United States, British, Indian, Persian, Australian and New Zealand, and Iraqi National Spiritual Assemblies, and indicated that this concerted action signalized the transition into the second epoch of the Formative Age. The internal consolidation and the administrative experience gained by the National Assemblies was utilized and mobilized by the Guardian with the launching of the Ten Year World Crusade—a crusade involving the simultaneous prosecution of twelve national plans. The plans derived their direction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, and the goals were assigned by Shoghi Effendi from the World Center of the Faith. A second distinguishing feature of this epoch was the "RISE" and "STEADY CONSOLIDATION" of the World Center of the Faith.

The Third Epoch of the Formative Age: 1963–1986

In addressing the British National Spiritual Assembly in 1951, the Guardian foreshadowed "worldwide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same [Formative] Age, by the Universal House of Justice." In announcing the Nine Year Plan, "the second of those world-encircling enterprises destined in the course of time to carry the Word of God to every human soul," the Universal House of Justice embarked upon the process anticipated by the Guardian and proclaimed the commencement of the third epoch of the Formative Age, an epoch which called the Bahá'ís to a yet more mature level of administrative functioning, consistent with the expected vast increase in the size and diversity of the community, its emergence as a model to mankind, and the extension of the influence of the Faith in the world at large. The House of Justice, in a letter dated October 1963, stated:

> *Beloved friends, the Cause of God, guarded and nurtured since its inception*

> *by God's Messengers, by the Center of His Covenant and by His Sign on earth, now enters a new epoch, the third of the Formative Age. It must now grow rapidly in size, increase its spiritual cohesion and executive ability, develop its institutions and extend its influence into all strata of society. We, its members, must, by constant study of the life-giving Word, and by dedicated service, deepen in spiritual understanding and show to the world a mature, responsible, fundamentally assured and happy way of life, far removed from the passions, prejudices and distractions of present day society.*

The period of the third epoch encompassed three world plans, involving all National Spiritual Assemblies, under the direction of the Universal House of Justice, namely, the Nine Year Plan (1964–1973), the Five Year Plan (1974–1979), and the Seven Year Plan (1979–1986). This third epoch witnessed the emergence of the Faith from obscurity and the initiation of activities designed to foster the social and economic development of communities. The institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors was brought into existence leading to the establishment of the International Teaching Centre. Assistants to the Auxiliary Boards were also introduced. At the World Center of the Faith, the historic construction and occupation of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice was a crowning event.

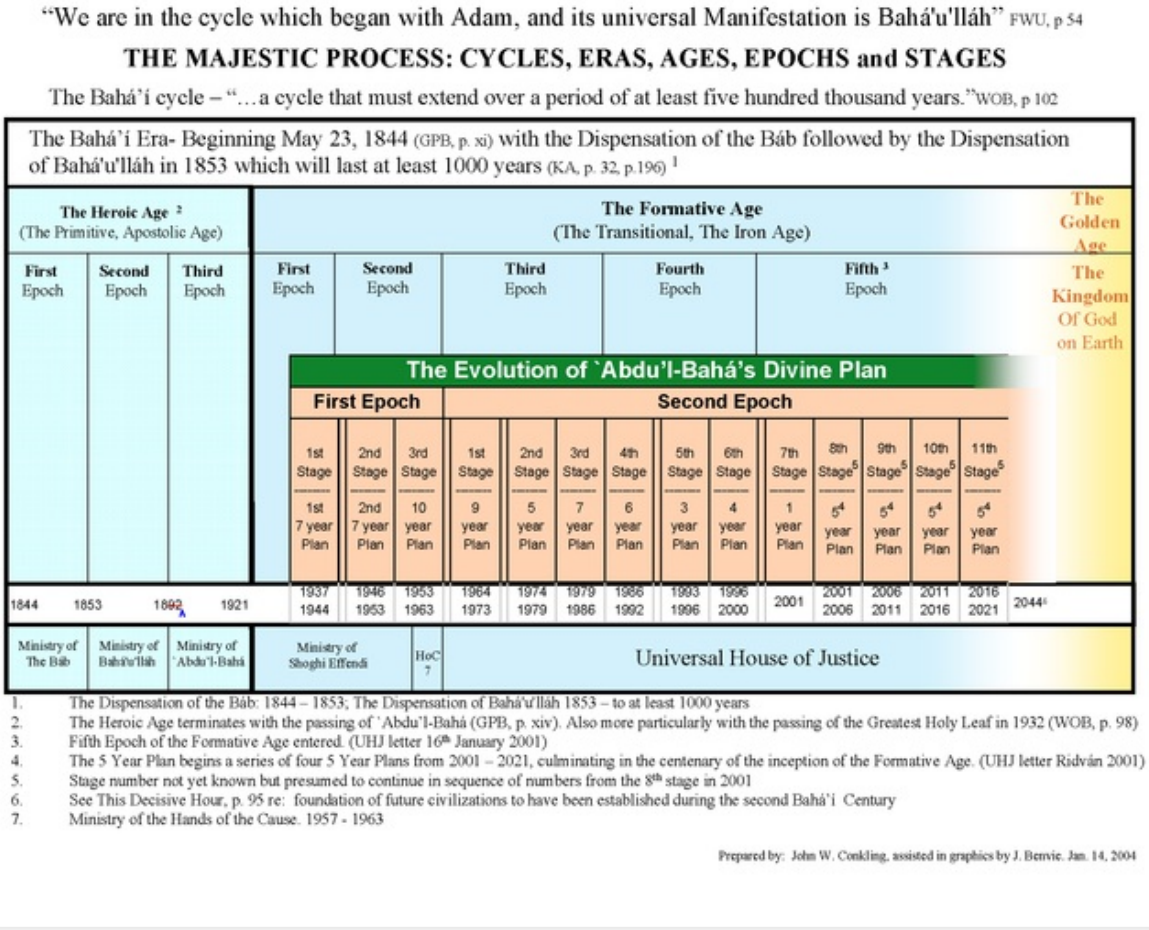
The Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age: 1986–

In a letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, the Supreme Body announced the inception of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. It highlighted the significant developments that had taken place in the "organic growth of the Cause of God" during the course of the recently completed third epoch, by assessing the readiness of the Bahá'í community to begin to address the objectives of the new Six Year Plan scheduled to begin on 21 April 1986, and, outlined the general aims and characteristics of this new Plan. Whereas national plans had previously derived largely from the World Center, in this new epoch the specific goals for each national community will be formulated, within the framework of the overall objectives of the Plan, by means of consultation between the particular National Spiritual Assembly and the Continental Board of Counselors. As the Universal House of Justice states:

> *This new process ... signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.*

Future Epochs

The tasks that remain to be accomplished during the course of the Formative Age are many and challenging. Additional epochs can be anticipated, each marking significant stages in the evolution of the Administrative Order and culminating in the Golden Age of the Faith. The Golden Age, itself, will involve "successive epochs" leading ultimately to the establishment of the Most Great Peace, to the World Bahá'í Commonwealth and to the "birth and efflorescence of a world civilization."


"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54
THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES
The Bahá'í cycle – "...a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years."WOB, p 102
The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2
(The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
The Formative Age
(The Transitional, The Iron Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Golden Age
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage5 5[4] year Plan
9th Stage5 5[4] year Plan
10th Stage5 5[4] year Plan
11th Stage5 5[4] year Plan
1844
1853
1892 A
1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice
1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963
Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernvic. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

February 5. On this date in 1918, Shaykh Kázim-i-Samandar, the author of "Tárikh-i-Samandar" died. Born into a prominent Bahá'í family of Qazvin of Bábí and Shaykhi background, Shoghi Effendi identified him as one of the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh.

Original file: 0196.html (position #157)

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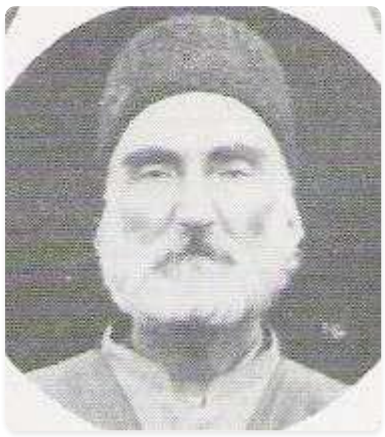
Díyá'u'lláh, the second son of Bahá'u'lláh through his second wife Fatimih (also known as Mahd-i-'Ulya), was born on August 15, 1864, in Edirne. Díyá'u'lláh married Thurayyá Samandarí, the daughter of Káziṃ-i-Samandar (author of *Tárikh-i-Samandar* and one of

the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh to whom was addressed the *Lawh-i Fu'ád*) and sister of Ṭaráẓu'lláh Samandarí (who was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1951).

Becuase they sided with Muhammad 'Alí in his argument with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, both Thurayyá and Díyá'u'lláh were declared Covenant-breakers. After his death in 1898, Díyá'u'lláh had initially been buried next to his father at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at the Mansion of Bahjí. However, having been declared a Covenant-breaker, Díyá'u'lláh's remains were disinterred in 1965 in a process the Universal House of Justice described as a "purification... from past contamination."



Comments

February 5. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...we are a new organism, the dawn-breakers of a New World Order, must constantly animate our Bahá'í lives, and we must pray to be protected from the contamination of society which is so diseased with prejudice."

Original file: 0195.html (position #156)

February 5. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) "Love for each other, the deep sense that we are a new organism, the dawn-breakers of a New World Order, must constantly animate our Bahá'í lives, and we must pray to be protected from the contamination of society which is so diseased with prejudice."

> *1509. Pray to be Protected from Contamination of Society*
>
> *"...Love for each other, the deep sense that we are a new organism, the dawn-breakers of a New World Order, must constantly animate our Bahá'í lives, and we*

must pray to be protected from the contamination of society which is so diseased with prejudice."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Atlanta, Georgia, February 5, 1947: Living the Life, p. 13)

Also here...

1347. We Must Pray to be Protected from the Contamination of Society

"The friends must, at all times, bear in mind that they are, in a way, like soldiers under attack. The world is at present in an exceedingly dark condition spiritually; hatred and prejudice, of every sort, are literally tearing it to pieces. We, on the other hand, are the custodians of the opposite forces, the forces of love, of unity, of peace and integration, and we must constantly be on our guard, whether as individuals or as an Assembly or Community, lest through us these destructive, negative forces enter into our midst. In other words, we must beware lest the darkness of society become reflected in our acts and attitudes, perhaps all unconsciously. Love for each other, the deep sense that we are a new organism, the dawn-breakers of a New World Order, must constantly animate our Bahá'í lives, and we must pray to be protected from the contamination of society which is so diseased with prejudice."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Atlanta, February 5, 1947)

Comments

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> *1347. We Must Pray to be Protected from the Contamination of Society*
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(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Atlanta, February 5, 1947)

Comments

February 5. On this date in 1938, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í News Service Committee stated "The Guardian wishes your Committee to capitalize all pronouns when referring to Bahá'u'lláh, the Bab and the Master, even though the newspapers do not use them."

Original file: 0193.html (position #154)

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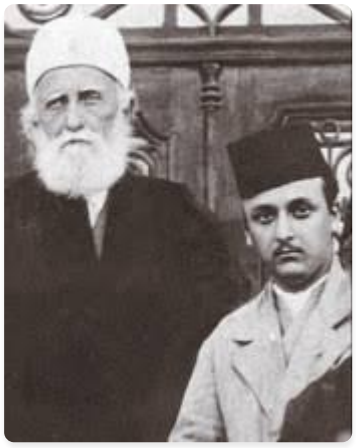
> *364. Capitalizing Pronouns in English*

> *"The Guardian wishes your Committee to capitalize all pronouns when referring to Bahá'u'lláh, the Bab and the Master, even though the newspapers do not use them."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í News Service Committee, February 5, 1938)*



Comments

February 5. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote "the term 'Bahá'í World Faith' ... The designation 'The Bahá'í Faith' is more dignified and preferable. Any adjective added to this name tends to a diminution of its stature and might be taken to mean that there are other 'Bahá'í Faiths'."

Original file: 0192.html (position #153)

February 5. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote "the term 'Bahá'í World Faith' ... The designation 'The Bahá'í Faith' is more dignified and preferable. Any adjective added to this name tends to a diminution of its stature and might be taken to mean that there are other 'Bahá'í Faiths'."

> *374. Bahá'í Faith, Designation of*

> *"In reply to your letter of January 26th, we realize that there are occasions on which the use of the term 'Bahá'í World Faith' may be justified and useful. However, it is our hope that the friends will gradually lose the habit of using this term as widely as they do now. The designation 'The Bahá'í Faith' is more dignified and preferable. Any adjective added to this name tends to a diminution of its stature and might be taken to mean that there are other 'Bahá'í Faiths'."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, February 5, 1967: Copies to various National Spiritual Assemblies)*

Comments

February 5. On this date in 1969, the UHJ wrote "children of Covenant-breakers, who have grown up with and still associate with their parents, are probably thoroughly infused with the Covenant-breaking spirit, and the friends must not associate with them until the Hands of the Cause have...."

Original file: 0191.html (position #152)

February 5. On this date in 1969, the UHJ wrote "children of Covenant-breakers, who have grown up with and still associate with their parents, are probably thoroughly infused with the Covenant-breaking spirit, and the friends must not associate with them until the Hands of the Cause have ascertained that these children have understood the sin of their parents and dissociated themselves from them."

> *...children of Covenant-breakers, who have grown up with and still associate with their parents, are probably thoroughly infused with the Covenant-breaking spirit, and the friends must not associate with them until the Hands of the Cause have ascertained that these children have understood the sin of their parents and dissociated themselves from them.*
>
> *(From letter dated 5 February 1969 to an individual believer)*

Comments

February 5. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá’ís as the "materially most powerful, spiritually most endowed nation mankind's most critical pregnant ordeal tests spirit challenges audacity promoters Divine Plan"

Original file: 0190.html (position #151)

February 5. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá’ís as the "materially most powerful, spiritually most endowed nation mankind's most critical pregnant ordeal tests spirit challenges audacity promoters Divine Plan"

> *Ordeal Tests Spirits, Challenges Audacity*
>
> *5 FEBRUARY 1942*
>
> *IMMERSION MATERIALLY MOST POWERFUL SPIRITUALLY MOST ENDOWED NATION MANKIND'S MOST CRITICAL PREGNANT ORDEAL TESTS SPIRIT CHALLENGES AUDACITY PROMOTERS DIVINE PLAN. PRIVILEGES CONFERRED IMMEASURABLE TIME THEIR DISPOSAL HOURLY*

SHORTENING. RESPONSIBILITIES COMMENSURATELY MOUNTING. FIRST FRUITS ALREADY GARNERED UNBELIEVABLY RICH. BAHA'I WORLD'S ATTENTION FOCUSED WINNERS SUCH PRIZES MORE FIRMLY FIXED. SISTER COMMUNITIES EUROPEAN CONTINENT ENGULFED SEVERED WORLD CENTER FAITH. OTHER COMMUNITIES AUSTRALIA INDIA PERSIA EGYPT NOT EXCEPTING HOLY LAND FACING INCREASINGLY GRAVE SITUATION. ENVIABLE NORTH AMERICAN BAHA'I COMMUNITY MUST, SUPPORTED BY DAUGHTER ASSEMBLIES WESTERN HEMISPHERE, HOLD FORT ALONE IF NECESSARY. PROMPTED DIRECT SPECIAL ATTENTION BAB'S CLARION CALL ADDRESSED PEOPLE WEST ISSUE FORTH THEIR CITIES AID CAUSE, BAHA'U'LLAH'S SUBSEQUENT SPECIFIC UNIQUE SUMMONS ALL PRESIDENTS REPUBLICS NEW WORLD, 'ABDU'L-BAHA'S STILL MORE SPECIFIC FORMULATION PLAN ENTRUSTED NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT. IMPELLED URGE ALL BELIEVERS GIVE HENCEFORTH URGENT SUSTAINED PRIMARY CONSIDERATION ALL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS SUMMER SCHOOL SESSIONS CONVENTION DELIBERATIONS NINETEEN DAY FEASTS REGIONAL CONFERENCES TEACHING GATHERINGS SPEEDY ACCOMPLISHMENT SPECIFIC TEACHING TASKS NORTH AMERICAN STATES PROVINCES CENTRAL SOUTHERN REPUBLICS. SEVENTH YEAR FIRST BAHA'I CENTURY WITNESSED TERMINATION LAST OF THREE SUCCESSIVE UPHEAVALS INVOLVING SACRIFICE LIVES MAJORITY DAWN-BREAKERS HEROIC AGE. CAN SACRIFICE HOME POSSESSIONS COMFORT SECURITY BY THEIR DESCENDANTS CHAMPION BUILDERS FORMATIVE AGE BE DEEMED TOO GREAT FOR SAKE PLAN ASSOCIATED WITH LAST SEVEN YEARS SAME CENTURY AND WHOSE UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS CAN ALONE BEFITTINGLY CROWN IT?

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1845, the Báb departed Medina, having completed his Hajj pilgrimage. The Báb performed the Hajj after the eighteen Letters of the Living had accepted him as the Báb.

Original file: 0189.html (position #150)

February 6. On this date in 1845, the Báb departed Medina, having completed his Hajj pilgrimage. The Báb performed the Hajj after the eighteen Letters of the Living had accepted him as the Báb.

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote "the Bahá'í Writings affirm that the human soul comes into being at the time of conception. However, they do not clearly define the exact biological moment and nature of the event described as conception and this may, indeed, be a question that is..."

Original file: 0188.html (position #149)

February 6. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the Bahá'í Writings affirm that the human soul comes into being at the time of conception. However, they do not clearly define the exact biological moment and nature of the event described as conception and this may, indeed, be a question that is insoluble by human thought or investigation, since it relates to mysteries of the spiritual world and the nature of the soul itself."

> *... the Bahá'í Writings affirm that the human soul comes into being at the time of conception. However, they do not clearly define the exact biological moment and nature of the event described as conception and this may, indeed, be a question that is insoluble by human thought or investigation, since it relates to mysteries of the spiritual world and the nature of the soul itself.*
>
> *(6 February 1997, to a National Spiritual Assembly)*

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1956, Ahang Rabbani was born in Tehran, Iran. A prolific Bahá'í translator and historian who served as director of statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre from 1981 to 1988. His translation are said to whitewash, censor,and obfuscate problematic matters in Bahá'í scripture

Original file: 0187.html (position #148)

February 6. On this date in 1956, Ahang Rabbani was born in Tehran, Iran. A prolific Bahá'í translator and historian who served as director of statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre from 1981 to 1988. His translation are said to whitewash, censor,and obfuscate problematic matters in Bahá'í scripture.

From the chapter titled "Dr Ahang Rabbani: A translator in good faith or a Baha'i whitewasher" in the book *Twelve Principles: A Comprehensive Investigation on the*

> *While investigating how Baha'is censor and hide problematic matters in their scripture which had been inadvertently exposed by Dr Rabbani (the case has been documented in another article here), it was realized that Ahang Rabbani himself had distorted a number of very problematic statements while translating the volumes that he had been working on. In two cases, these distortions are amended by footnotes which state the translations are approximate/not precise, while in fact they are neither but an outright twisting of the truth.*
>
> *In this article we will analyze the distortions introduced by Dr Rabbani in the work A Lifetime with Abdu'l-Bahá: Reminiscences of Khalil Shahidi. Also, a single quote from another one of his translations which is worthy of mentioning will be presented.*
>
> *...*
>
> *Pay attention to the following quote from Abdu'l-Baha:*
>
> > *"If you ask about Tiberius, know that its stones are black, its inhabitants are Jewish and their appearance is basic." (Ahang Rabbani, A Lifetime with 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Reminiscences of Khalíl Shahídí, p. 68)*
>
> *Dr Rabbani writes a footnote at the end of this statement: "The narrator gives this statement in both original Arabic and translation in Persian. Translation of the final phrase is not precise." (footnote no. 74)*
>
> *...*
>
> *The two arrows point to two sentences: one in Arabic and the same sentence again in Farsi:*
>
> > *" وجوههم كالقرد"*
> >
> > *" صورتهایشان مانند میمونان است"*

The translation of these statements is this:

> *"their appearance is like monkeys/apes"!*

So this is what Abdu'l-Baha had said about the Jews of Tiberius:

> *"If you ask about Tiberius, know that its stones are black, its inhabitants are Jewish and their appearance is like monkeys/apes."*

This is how it was translated by the professional Baha'i translator who is no longer amongst us:

> *"If you ask about Tiberius, know that its stones are black, its inhabitants are Jewish and their appearance is basic."*

...

According to Ahang Rabbani, this is how Abdu'l-Baha had compared Baha'is with non-Baha'is:

> *"'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The least of the friends is better than the fairest of the nonbelievers." Moreover, He used to say, "The worst of the friends is better than the best of the nonbelievers."" (Ahang Rabbani, A Lifetime with 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Reminiscences of Khalíl Shahídí*, p. 81)*

...

The section marked in red that has been uttered by Abdu'l-Baha reads:

> *"یک کاکاسیاه احباب بهتر از یک حوریه اغیار است"*

Which translates to:

> *"A Baha'i nigger is better than a non-Baha'i nymph"!*

Apologies for using the n word! The original Farsi word Abdu'l-Baha used is 'kaka siah' (کاکا سیاه) which is the equivalent of 'nigger' in English.

Compare with Rabbani's translation:

> *"The least of the friends is better than the fairest of the nonbelievers."*

What is more shameful is the fact that the word 'least' has been used as an equivalent for 'nigger'!

...

Pay attention to the following quote:

> *"One of the pillars of the Covenant-breakers was named Muhammad-Javád Qazvíní. When he strolled, he held his neck exceedingly straight, particularly if he came upon the friends or His blessed Temple ['Abdu'l-Bahá]. 'Abdul-Bahá would say, "He is like someone with a back injury, and forced to hold his neck straight to ease the pain." (Ahang Rabbani, A Lifetime with 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Reminiscences of Khalíl Shahídí, p. 91)*

What was so special about the last sentence that needed to be mentioned in the memoirs: "He is like someone with a back injury, and forced to hold his neck straight to ease the pain."

...

The section underlined in red reads:

> *"این مثل الاغی می ماند که کمرش زخم شده باشد و از شدت درد گردنش را شق نگه دارد."*

Which translates to:

> *"He is like a donkey with a back injury, and forced to hold his neck straight to ease the pain."*

Abdu'l-Baha has compared a covenant-breaker with a donkey. This isn't strange from Abdu'l-Baha. After all he is the son of Baha'u'llah who would refer to his deniers and enemies as donkeys, pigs, and dogs. *Now, compare with Dr Rabbani's translation:*

> *"He is like someone with a back injury, and forced to hold his neck straight to ease the pain."*

Dr Rabbani writes in the footnote that this is "an approximate translation". Apparently, in the Baha'i teachings, 'donkey' is an approximate translation for 'someone'!

...

According to Ahang Rabbani this is how Abdu'l-Baha responded to a Jew he was debating:

> *"'Abdu'l-Bahá immediately responded back with the lines,*
>
> > *This faith is true, that a delight!*
> >
> > *and yet the mob, an ugly sight,*
> >
> > *Protested it with all their might!*

> *I wish I knew which one was right!*
>
> *However, while He was saying, "and yet the mob, an ugly sight," He was pointing to him with His blessed hand, meaning, "You are that ugly sight who denies these two Dispensations." (Ahang Rabbani, A Lifetime with 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Reminiscences of Khalíl Shahídí, pp. 23-24)*

The original words (see image below) that Dr Rabbani has translated as "yet the mob, an ugly sight" read as:

> *"و لکن القوم القبیح"*

These words translate to: "But the ugly people/race." This is the first distortion in the translation. The second distortion occurs in the sentence: "You are that ugly sight." In the original Farsi, the word translated as 'You' has been used in the plural form (shoma-ha) which means Abdu'l-Baha was referring to all Jews not just the person he was conversing with. Abdu'l-Baha directly calls the followers of Judaism an "ugly people/race." This statement has been clearly distorted in the translation.

Ironically, Dr Rabbani states that he has made great effort to translate this work precisely and in the style and manner of the original text:

> *"Since the account is a primary source document, every effort was made to translate it precisely in the style and manner of the original, in hope that by so doing it would convey a flavor of the original text." (Ahang Rabbani, A Lifetime with 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Reminiscences of Khalíl Shahídí, p. 8)*

We'll leave it to the readers to Judge Dr Rabbani on this statement.

...

Comments

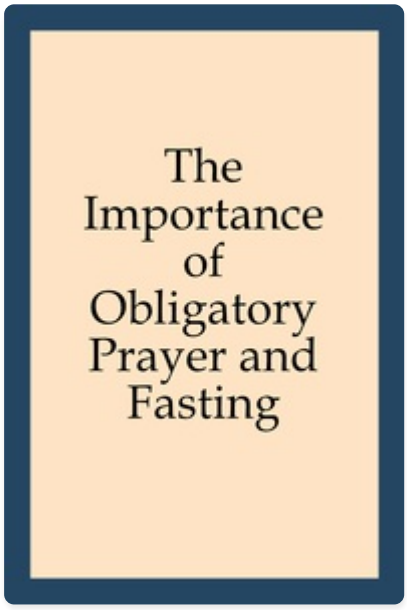
February 6. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "...a prayer collectively and congregational prayer. The latter is a formal prayer usually led by an individual using a prescribed ritual. Congregational prayer in this form is forbidden in the Faith except in the case of the Prayer for the Dead."

Original file: 0186.html (position #147)

February 6. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "There is a difference between chanting a prayer collectively and congregational prayer. The latter is a formal prayer usually led by an individual using a prescribed ritual. Congregational prayer in this form is forbidden in the Faith except in the case of the Prayer for the Dead."

> *1503. Prayers May Be Recited in Unison*

> *"You have asked whether it is permissible for the friends to chant a prayer collectively. There is a difference between chanting a prayer collectively and congregational prayer. The latter is a formal prayer usually led by an individual using a prescribed ritual. Congregational prayer in this form is forbidden in the Faith except in the case of the Prayer for the Dead. While reciting prayers in unison and spontaneously joining in the recitation of the Words of God is not forbidden, the friends should bear in mind the advice of the beloved Guardian on this subject when he stated that:*
>
> *'...although the friends are thus left free to follow their own inclination, ... they should take the utmost care that any manner they practice should not acquire too rigid a character, and thus develop into an institution. This is a point which the friends should always bear in mind, lest they deviate from the clear path indicated in the Teachings.'"*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, February 6, 1975)*



Comments

February 6. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "..I trust in His ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] wondrous love for me. May I in no wise by my deeds, thoughts or words, impede the stream of His sustaining Spirit which I sorely need in facing the responsibilities He has placed on my youthful shoulders..."

Original file: 0185.html (position #146)

February 6. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "..I trust in His ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] wondrous love for me. May I in no wise by my deeds, thoughts or words, impede the stream of His sustaining Spirit which I sorely need in facing the responsibilities He has placed on my youthful shoulders..."

From Chapter 2 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, titled 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension and its Consquences...

> *On February 6, 1922 he wrote to one of the Persian Bahá'ís: "I wish to be known, to realize myself however far I may proceed in future, as one and only one of the many workers in His Vineyards ... whatever may betide I trust in His ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] wondrous love for me. May I in no wise by my deeds, thoughts or words, impede the stream of His sustaining Spirit which I sorely need in facing the responsibilities He has placed on my youthful shoulders..."*

Comments

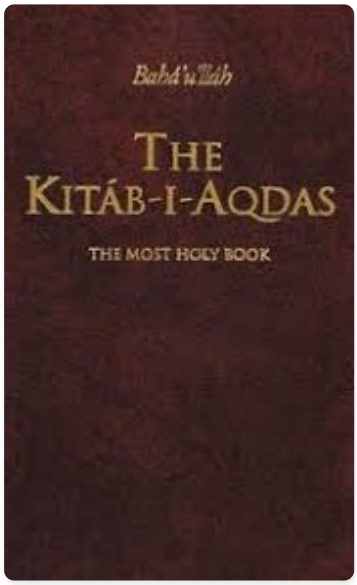
February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "Just as there are laws governing our physical lives...so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being..

Original file: 0184.html (position #145)

February 6. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Just as there are laws governing our physical lives, requiring that we must supply our bodies with certain foods, maintain them within a certain range of temperatures, and so forth, if we wish to avoid physical disabilities, so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being, and mankind in general, is to develop properly and harmoniously. Moreover, these various aspects are interdependent. If an individual

violates the spiritual laws for his own development, he will cause injury not only to himself but to the society in which he lives. Similarly, the condition of society has a direct effect on the individuals who must live within it."

> *1146. Laws Governing Physical and Spiritual Lives*
>
> *"Just as there are laws governing our physical lives, requiring that we must supply our bodies with certain foods, maintain them within a certain range of temperatures, and so forth, if we wish to avoid physical disabilities, so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being, and mankind in general, is to develop properly and harmoniously. Moreover, these various aspects are interdependent. If an individual violates the spiritual laws for his own development, he will cause injury not only to himself but to the society in which he lives. Similarly, the condition of society has a direct effect on the individuals who must live within it."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer; excerpts to all National Spiritual Assemblies, February 6, 1973: Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973, pp. 105-106)*



Comments

February 6. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife...."

Original file: 0183.html (position #144)

Bahá'í History - February 6. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote (also here) "The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife...."

> *1158. Sexual Intercourse Permissible Only Between Man and Wife*
>
> *"The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife...."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, February 6, 1973; excerpt from a letter in response to questions from an individual believer: Ibid.)*

Also here...

1215. Chastity Should Be Strictly Practiced by Both Sexes

"The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife. In this connection we share with you extracts from four letters written on behalf of the Guardian which throw light on various aspects of the matter...."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, February 6, 1973)

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera..."

Original file: 0182.html (position #143)

February 6. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera: he does not attain the happiness he sought, he retards his spiritual advance and often brings new problems upon himself."

> *1209. One Must Learn to Control Animal Impulses, Not Be a Slave to Them*
>
> *"In considering the effect of obedience to the laws on individual lives, one must*

remember that the purpose of this life is to prepare the soul for the next. Here one must learn to control and direct one's animal impulses, not to be a slave to them. Life in this world is a succession of tests and achievements, of falling short and of making new spiritual advances. Sometimes the course may seem very hard, but one can witness, again and again, that the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera: he does not attain the happiness he sought, he retards his spiritual advance and often brings new problems upon himself."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, excerpts from a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies, February 6, 1973)

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ quoted Shoghi Effendi has having said "Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation."

Original file: 0181.html (position #142)

February 6. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice quoted Shoghi Effendi has having said "Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy."

> *1267. Moral Duty to Marry But Marriage is Not an Obligation*
>
> *"...Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his*

> *moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 3, 1936; cited by the Universal House of Justice in a letter to an individual believer, February 6, 1973: Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973, pp. 109-110)*

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Spain an LSA "is correct in its decision to conduct the Nineteen Day Feasts in Spanish and to not translate the proceedings in Persian, especially in view of the fact that some of the Spanish friends are becoming alienated..."

Original file: 0180.html (position #141)

February 6. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain a Local Spiritual Assembly "is correct in its decision to conduct the Nineteen Day Feasts in Spanish and to not translate the proceedings in Persian, especially in view of the fact that some of the Spanish friends are becoming alienated from the community. Although the Iranian believers should make every effort to attend the Nineteen Day Feasts, they should not expect such meetings to be conducted in Persian."

> *The Local Spiritual Assembly of " is correct in its decision to conduct the Nineteen Day Feasts in Spanish and to not translate the proceedings in Persian, especially in view of the fact that some of the Spanish friends are becoming alienated from the community. Although the Iranian believers should make every effort to attend the Nineteen Day Feasts, they should not expect such meetings to be conducted in Persian. They should try to learn Spanish, particularly if they are planning to make their home in Spain. There is no objection, however, to Persian friends if they so wish having special meetings for fellowship and deepening conducted in Persian.*
>
> *(6 February 1983 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain)*

Comments

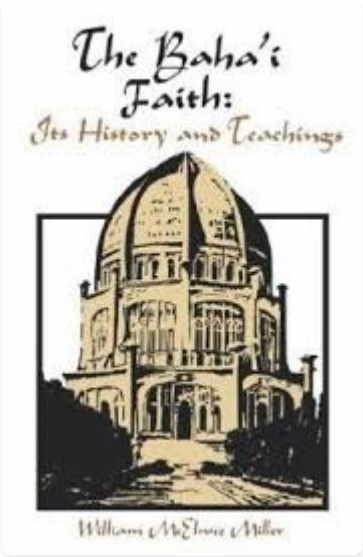
February 6. On this date in 1981, the NSA of the US wrote it "has no documentation verifying the authenticity of the illustrations in Mr. William McElwee Miller's book, and as such they cannot be regarded as being of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab." One year previous the UHJ had written otherwise.

Original file: 0179.html (position #140)

February 6. On this date in 1981, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United State wrote (also here) "We would like to point out to you that the National Spiritual Assembly has no documentation verifying the authenticity of the illustrations in Mr. William McElwee Miller's book, and as such they cannot be regarded as being of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab."

One year previous, on March 30, 1980, the Universal House of Justice had written "The picture on page 83 of William Miller's book is a portrait of Bahá'u'lláh, but different from the one displayed in the International Archives."

> *"We would like to point out to you that the National Spiritual Assembly has no documentation verifying the authenticity of the illustrations in Mr. William McElwee Miller's book, and as such they cannot be regarded as being of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab."*
>
> *Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to an individual 6 February 1981*
>
> *"The picture on page 83 of William Miller's book, but different from the one displayed in the International Archives."*
>
> *Universal House of Justice to an individual 30 March 1980*



Comments

February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh..."

Original file: 0178.html (position #139)

February 6. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome."

Challenge to Individuals to Obey the Law of God in Their Personal Lives

6 February 1973

To All National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The following is an excerpt from a letter written recently in response to questions from an individual believer. As it is of general interest we are sending it to you so that you may share it with the friends within your jurisdiction in whatever manner you judge wise and necessary.

Just as there are laws governing our physical lives, requiring that we must supply our bodies with certain foods, maintain them within a certain range of temperatures, and so forth, if we wish to avoid physical disabilities, so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being, and mankind in general, is to develop properly and harmoniously. Moreover, these various aspects are interdependent. If an individual violates the spiritual laws for his own development he will cause injury not only to himself but to the society in which he lives. Similarly, the condition of society has a direct effect on the individuals who must live within it.

As you point out, it is particularly difficult to follow the laws of Bahá'u'lláh in present-day society whose accepted practice is so at variance with the standards of the Faith. However, there are certain laws that are so fundamental to the healthy functioning of human society that they must be upheld whatever the circumstances. Realizing the degree of human frailty, Bahá'u'lláh has provided that other laws are to be applied only gradually, but these too, once they are applied, must be followed, or else society will not be reformed but will sink into an ever worsening condition. It is the challenging task of the Bahá'ís to obey the law of God in their own lives, and gradually to win the rest of mankind to its acceptance.

In considering the effect of obedience to the laws on individual lives, one must remember that the purpose of this life is to prepare the soul for the next. Here one must learn to control and direct one's animal impulses, not to be a slave to them. Life in this world is a succession of tests and. achievements, of falling short and of making new spiritual advances. Sometimes the course may seem very hard, but

one can witness, again and again, that the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera: he does not attain the happiness he sought, he retards his spiritual advance and often brings new problems upon himself

To give one very obvious example: the Bahá'í law requiring consent of parents to marriage. All too often nowadays such consent is withheld by non-Bahá'í parents for reasons of bigotry or racial prejudice; yet we have seen again and again the profound effect on those very parents of the firmness of the children in the Bahá'í law, to the extent that not only is the consent ultimately given in many cases, but the character of the parents can be affected and their relationship with their child greatly strengthened.

Thus, by upholding Bahá'í law in the face of all difficulties we not only strengthen our own characters but influence those around us.

The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife. In this connection we share with you extracts from four letters written on behalf of the Guardian which throw light on various aspects of the matter. One of them contains the paragraph that you quote in your letter.

With reference to the question you have asked concerning the Bahá'í attitude towards the problem of sex and its relation to marriage.

The Bahá'í Teachings on this matter, which is of such vital concern and about which there is such a wide divergency of views, are very clear and emphatic. Briefly stated the Bahá'í conception of sex is based on the belief that chastity should be strictly practiced by both sexes, not only because it is in itself highly commendable ethically, but also due to its being the only way to a happy and successful marital life. Sex relationships of any form, outside marriage, are not permissible therefore, and whoso violates this rule will not only be responsible to God, but will incur the necessary punishment from society.

> *The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the value of the sex impulse, but condemns its illegitimate and improper expressions such as free love, companionate marriage and others, all of which it considers positively harmful to man and*

to the society in which he lives. The proper use of the sex instinct is the natural right of every individual, and it is precisely for this very purpose that the institution of marriage has been established. The Bahá'ís do not believe in the suppression of the sex impulse but in its regulation and control.

(From a letter dated September 5, 1938, to an individual believer)

The question you raise as to the place in one's life that a deep bond of love with someone we meet other than our husband or wife can have is easily defined in view of the teachings. Chastity implies both before and after marriage an unsullied, chaste sex life. Before marriage absolutely chaste, after marriage absolutely faithful to one's chosen companion. Faithful in all sexual acts, faithful in word and in deed.

The world today is submerged, amongst other things, in an over-exaggeration of the importance of physical love, and a dearth of spiritual values. In as far as possible the believers should try to realize this and rise above the level of their fellowmen who are, typical of all decadent periods in history, placing so much overemphasis on the purely physical side of mating. Outside of their normal, legitimate married life they should seek to establish bonds of comradeship and love which are eternal and founded on the spiritual life of man, not on his physical life. This is one of the many fields in which it is incumbent on the Bahá'ís to set the example and lead the way to a true human standard of life, when the soul of man is exalted and his body but the tool for his enlightened spirit. Needless to say this does not preclude the living of a perfectly normal sex life in its legitimate channel of marriage.

(From a letter dated September 28, 1941, to an individual believer)

Concerning your question whether there are any legitimate forms of expression of the sex instinct outside of marriage; according to the Bahá'í Teachings no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful or healthy use of the sex impulse. The Bahá'í youth should, on the one hand, be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development of character and of personality in general, and on the other should be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigor. Economic factors, no doubt, are often a serious hindrance to early

> *marriage but in most cases are only an excuse, and as such should not be over stressed.*
>
> *(From a letter dated December 13, 1940, to an individual believer)*
>
> *As regards your question whether it would be advisable and useful for you to marry again; he feels unable to give you any definite answer on that point, as this is essentially a private affair about which you, and the friends around you or your local assembly are in a much better position to judge. Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy.*
>
> *(From a letter dated May 3, 1936, to an individual believer)*

You express surprise at the Guardian's reference to "the necessary punishment from society." In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh prohibits sexual immorality and in the Annex to that Book states that the various degrees of sexual offenses and the punishments for them are to be decided by the Universal House of Justice. In this connection it should be realized that there is a distinction drawn in the Faith between the attitudes which should characterize individuals in their relationship to other people, namely, loving forgiveness, forbearance, and concern with one's own sins, not the sins of others, and those attitudes which should be shown by the Spiritual Assemblies, whose duty is to administer the law of God with Justice.

A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome. *This may require a hard struggle, but so also can be the struggle of a heterosexual person to control his or her desires. The exercise of self-control in this, as in so very many other aspects of life, has a beneficial effect on the progress of the soul. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that although to be married is highly desirable, and Bahá'u'lláh has strongly recommended it, it is not the central purpose of life. If a*

person has to wait a considerable period before finding a spouse, or if ultimately, he or she must remain single, it does not mean that he or she is thereby unable to fulfill his or her life's purpose.

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> *Challenge to Individuals to Obey the Law of God in Their Personal Lives*

6 February 1973

To All National Spiritual Assemblies

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Just as there are laws governing our physical lives, requiring that we must supply our bodies with certain foods, maintain them within a certain range of temperatures, and so forth, if we wish to avoid physical disabilities, so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being, and mankind in general, is to develop properly and harmoniously. Moreover, these various aspects are interdependent. If an individual violates the spiritual laws for his own development he will cause injury not only to himself but to the society in which he lives. Similarly, the condition of society has a direct effect on the individuals who must live within it.

As you point out, it is particularly difficult to follow the laws of Bahá'u'lláh in present-day society whose accepted practice is so at variance with the standards of the Faith. However, there are certain laws that are so fundamental to the healthy functioning of human society that they must be upheld whatever the circumstances. Realizing the degree of human frailty, Bahá'u'lláh has provided that other laws are to be applied only gradually, but these too, once they are applied, must be followed, or else society will not be reformed but will sink into an ever worsening condition. It is the challenging task of the Bahá'ís to obey the law of God in their own lives, and gradually to win the rest of mankind to its acceptance.

In considering the effect of obedience to the laws on individual lives, one must remember that the purpose of this life is to prepare the soul for the next. Here one must learn to control and direct one's animal impulses, not to be a slave to them. Life in this world is a succession of tests and. achievements, of falling short and of making new spiritual advances. Sometimes the course may seem very hard, but one can witness, again and again, that the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who

compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera: he does not attain the happiness he sought, he retards his spiritual advance and often brings new problems upon himself

To give one very obvious example: the Bahá'í law requiring consent of parents to marriage. All too often nowadays such consent is withheld by non-Bahá'í parents for reasons of bigotry or racial prejudice; yet we have seen again and again the profound effect on those very parents of the firmness of the children in the Bahá'í law, to the extent that not only is the consent ultimately given in many cases, but the character of the parents can be affected and their relationship with their child greatly strengthened.

Thus, by upholding Bahá'í law in the face of all difficulties we not only strengthen our own characters but influence those around us.

The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife. In this connection we share with you extracts from four letters written on behalf of the Guardian which throw light on various aspects of the matter. One of them contains the paragraph that you quote in your letter.

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> *The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the value of the sex impulse, but condemns its illegitimate and improper expressions such as free love, companionate marriage and others, all of which it considers positively harmful to man and to the society in which he lives. The proper use of the sex instinct is the natural right of every individual, and it is precisely for this very purpose that*

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> *(From a letter dated December 13, 1940, to an individual believer)*
>
> *As regards your question whether it would be advisable and useful for you to marry again; he feels unable to give you any definite answer on that point, as this is essentially a private affair about which you, and the friends around you or your local assembly are in a much better position to judge. Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy.*
>
> *(From a letter dated May 3, 1936, to an individual believer)*

You express surprise at the Guardian's reference to "the necessary punishment from society." In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh prohibits sexual immorality and in the Annex to that Book states that the various degrees of sexual offenses and the punishments for them are to be decided by the Universal House of Justice. In this connection it should be realized that there is a distinction drawn in the Faith between the attitudes which should characterize individuals in their relationship to other people, namely, loving forgiveness, forbearance, and concern with one's own sins, not the sins of others, and those attitudes which should be shown by the Spiritual Assemblies, whose duty is to administer the law of God with Justice.

A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome. *This may require a hard struggle, but so also can be the struggle of a heterosexual person to control his or her desires. The exercise of self-control in this, as in so very many other aspects of life, has a beneficial effect on the progress of the soul. It should,*

moreover, be borne in mind that although to be married is highly desirable, and Bahá'u'lláh has strongly recommended it, it is not the central purpose of life. If a person has to wait a considerable period before finding a spouse, or if ultimately, he or she must remain single, it does not mean that he or she is thereby unable to fulfill his or her life's purpose.

In all this we have been speaking about the attitude that Bahá'ís should have towards the law of Bahá'u'lláh. ***You, however, as a doctor working mainly as a counselor in family and sexual problems, will mostly be concerned with advising non-Bahá'ís who do not accept, and see no reason to follow, the laws of Bahá'u'lláh.*** *You are already a qualified practitioner in your field, and no doubt you give advice on the basis of what you have learned from study and experience — a whole fabric of concepts about the human mind, its growth, development and proper functioning, which you have learned and evolved without reference to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.* ***Now, as a Bahá'í, you know that what Bahá'u'lláh teaches about the purpose of human life, the nature of the human being and the proper conduct of human lives, is divinely revealed and therefore true.*** *However, it will inevitably take time for you not only to study the Bahá'í teachings so that you clearly understand them, but also to work out how they* ***modify your professional concepts.*** *This is, of course, not an unusual predicament for a scientist. How often in the course of research is a factor discovered which requires a revolution in thinking over a wide field of human endeavor.* ***You must be guided in each case by your own professional knowledge and judgment as illuminated by your growing knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings;*** *undoubtedly you will find that your own understanding of the human problems dealt with in your work will change and develop and you will see new and improved ways of helping the people who come to you.* ***Psychology is still a very young and inexact science, and as the years go by Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering.***

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Comments

February 6. On this date in 1986, an individual wrote the UHJ. The reply states "When two Bahá'ís are marrying, the wedding ceremony should not be held in the place of worship of another religion, nor should the forms of the marriage of other religions be added to the simple Bahá'í ceremony."

February 6. On this date in 1986, an individual wrote the UHJ. The reply states "When two Bahá'ís are marrying, the wedding ceremony should not be held in the place of worship of another religion, nor should the forms of the marriage of other religions be added to the simple Bahá'í ceremony."

> *1295. When a Bahá'í Marries a Non-Bahá'í Both Ceremonies Can Be Held in the*

Place of Worship of Another Religion, if Requested, and Provided that...

"In response to your email of 6 February 1986 we have been instructed by the Universal House of Justice to send you the following clarifications:

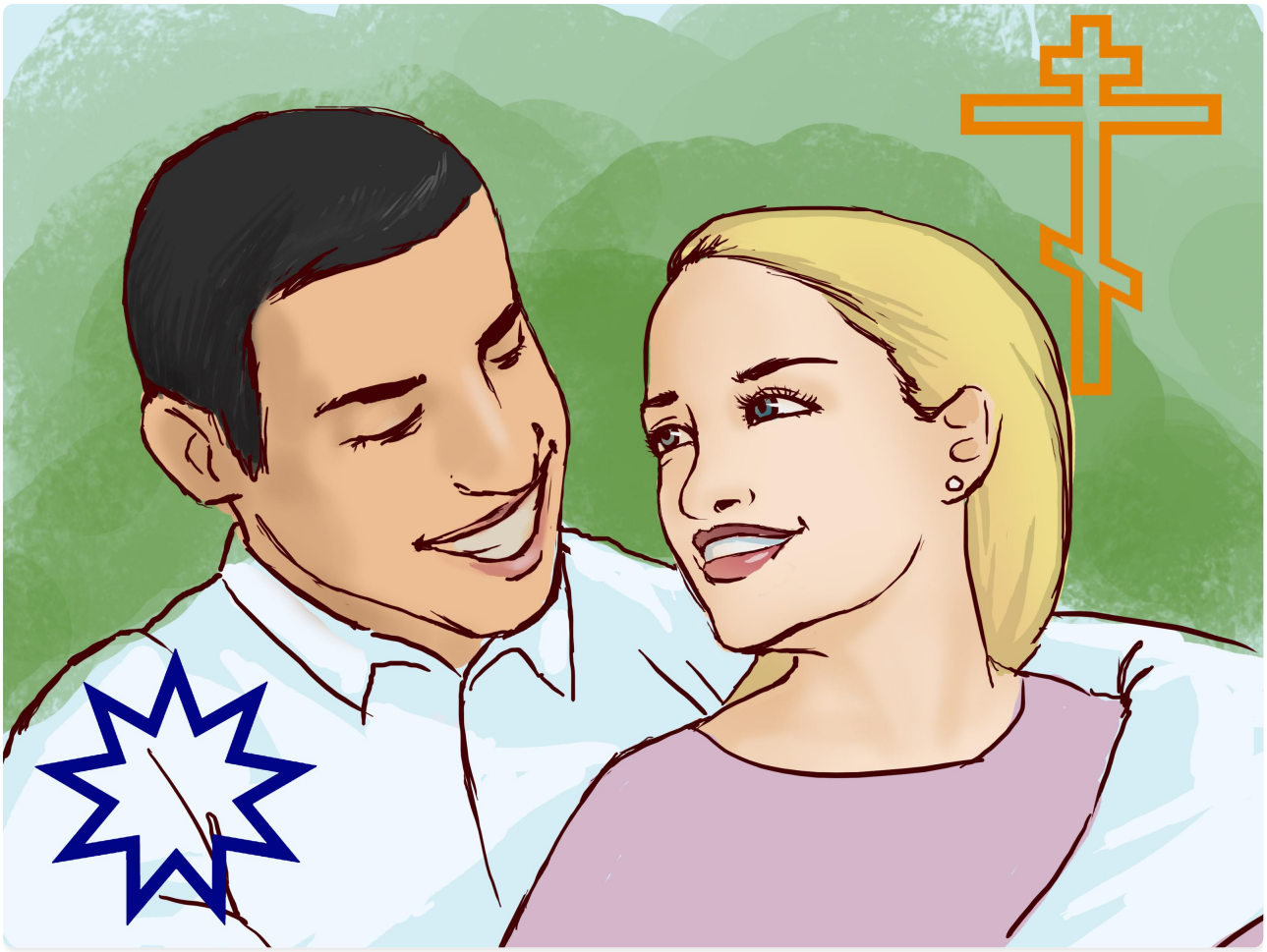
--- When two Bahá'ís are marrying, the wedding ceremony should not be held in the place of worship of another religion, nor should the forms of the marriage of other religions be added to the simple Bahá'í ceremony.

--- When a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í, and the religious wedding ceremony of the non-Bahá'í partner is to be held in addition to the Bahá'í ceremony, both ceremonies may, if requested, be held in the place of worship of the other religion provided that:

--- Equal respect is accorded to both ceremonies. In other words, the Bahá'í ceremony, which is basically so simple, should not be regarded as a mere formal adjunct to the ceremony of the other religion.

--- The two ceremonies are clearly distinct. In other words, they should not be commingled into one combined ceremony."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, February 26, 1986)



Comments

February 6. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The task is so overwhelmingly great, the realization of the inadequacy of my efforts and myself so deep that I cannot but give way and droop whenever I face my work..."

Original file: 0173.html (position #134)

February 6. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The task is so overwhelmingly great, the realization of the inadequacy of my efforts and myself so deep that I cannot but give way and droop whenever I face my work..."

From Chapter 2 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, titled The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' and Its Immediate Consquences...

> *In this letter, written on 6 February 1922, a little over one month after his return, he pours out his heart to his friend: "How intensely I feel the urgent need of a thorough regeneration to be effected within me, of a powerful effusion of strength, of confidence, of the Divine Spirit in my yearning soul, before I rise to take my destined place in the forefront of a Movement that advocates such glorious*

principles. I know that He will not leave me to myself, I trust in His guidance and believe in His wisdom, but what I crave is the abiding conviction and assurance that He will not fail me. The task is so overwhelmingly great, the realization of the inadequacy of my efforts and myself so deep that I cannot but give way and droop whenever I face my work..." This noble woman had evidently written to Shoghi Effendi such inspiring letters that he informs her that as he read them he was "moved to tears" and goes on to cry out "Oh how much in my youth and frailty, I need every now and then a vigorous appeal, a powerful reminder, a word of cheer and comfort!" He ends his letter with a very significant phrase, telling her that many times he has told the ladies of the household of her wise counsel "make not of the Movement a sect", and signs himself "I am yours very affectionately".

Comments

February 7. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Frankfurt, Germany, and another in Padua, Italy.

Original file: 0172.html (position #133)

February 7. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Frankfurt, Germany, and another in Padua, Italy.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in

good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual

election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

Comments

February 7. On this date in 2001, an individual asked the UHJ the "Two great powers" referred to in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd. The UHJ replied "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia."

Original file: 0171.html (position #132)

February 7. On this date in 2001, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice the "Two great powers" referred to in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd. On May 1, 2001, The Universal House of Justice replied "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia." Bahá'u'lláh wrote the *Tablet of Maqṣúd* on January 20, 1882.

Lawh-i-Maqsúd: Letter from the Universal House of Justice; excerpt from Juan Cole's

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice From: Research Department

Date: 1 May 2001

Lawh-i-Maqsúd1

The Research Department has studied the questions about the Lawh-i-Maqsúd raised by Mr. ... in his email message of 7 February 2001 to the Universal House of Justice. Specifically, he enquires about the date of the revelation of the Tablet of Maqsúd and he seeks information about the "Two great powers"2 referred to in this Tablet. We provide the following response.

Date of Revelation of the Tablet

The Lawh-i-Maqsúd was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the prison-city of 'Akká on the 29th of Safar 1299 A.H. (January 20 1882).

"Two great powers"

Mr. ... requests information about the "Two great powers", mentioned in the following passage from the Tablet of Maqsúd, that appears on page 170 of Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Two great powers who regard themselves as the founders and leaders of civilization and the framers of constitutions have risen up against the followers of the Faith associated with Him who conversed with God.3 The Research Department has not, to date, been able to locate any references in the Bahá'í Writings that explain the identity of the two countries that arose against the followers of Moses. However, from a perusal of European history in the second part of the 19th century, it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia. The world powers of the 1880s were Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Encyclopedia Judaica indicates that the Jews were officially emancipated in Germany during the latter half of the 19th century, and although there was some anti-semitic activity in Austria, it was officially opposed by the government. In France, however, between 1881 and 1894, there was a rise of anti-Jewish publicity and agitation, the founding of the National Anti-Semitic League in 1889, and the demand in 1891 by 32 French deputies (members of parliament) that Jews be expelled from France, culminated in the infamous Dreyfus Affair

of 1894. In Russia, the assassination of Alexander II led to pogroms, leading to the so-called "May laws" of 1882 which prohibited Jews from living in villages and in 1886 to the limitation of the number of Jews allowed into University. Discrimination was continued officially until 1918. There was no official anti-semitism in Britain.

Notes: 1 Published in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1997), pages 159-178. 2 Ibid., page 170. 3 Moses

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Universal House of Justice
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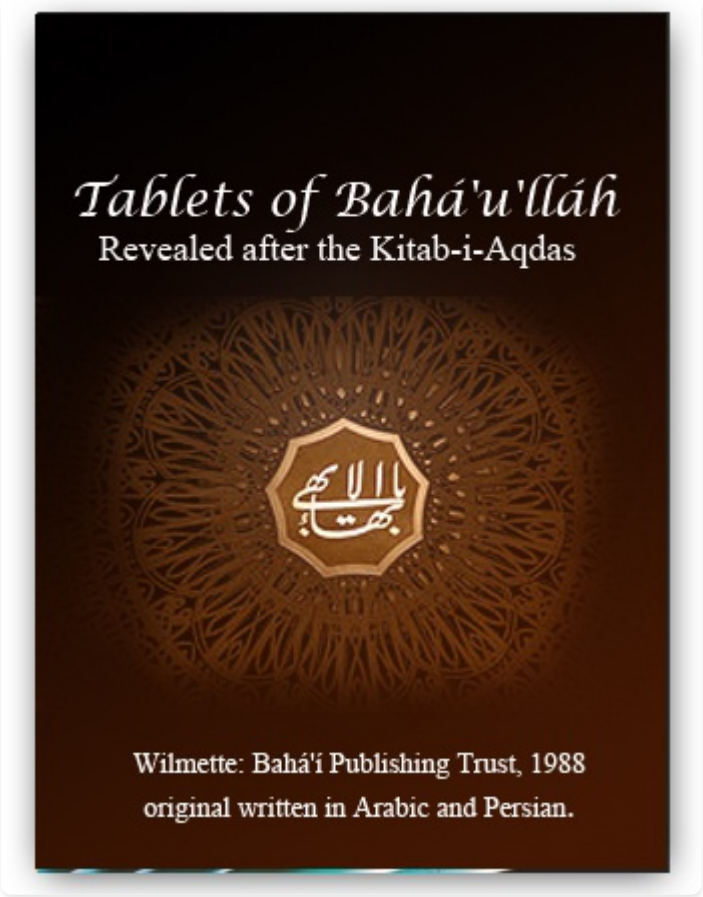

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh
Revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas
Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988
original written in Arabic and Persian.

Comments

February 7. On this date in 1916, the "Star of the West" published a letter by Charles Mason Remey describing "the great Mashrak-el-Azkar of the east," in Ashkabad.

Original file: 0170.html (position #131)

February 7. On this date in 1916, the *Star of the West* published a letter by Charles Mason Remey describing "the great Mashrak-el-Azkar of the east," in Ashgabat.

Mashrak-el-Azkar: Descriptive of the Bahai temple by Charles Mason Remey Chicago: Baha'i Publishing Society, 1917 1) Introduction: Letter published in Star of the West 6:18, February 7, 1916, pp. 153-155. The Mashrak-el-Azkar of Ishkabad By Charles Mason Remey

Washington, D. C., October 12, 1908. To the House of Spirituality of Bahais, Chicago, Ill.

Brothers in the service of Abha:-

As you have arisen for the construction of the first Mashrak-el-Azkar in America, and, as I have recently visited Ishkabad and seen there the great Mashrak-el-Azkar of the east, of which we in the west have heard so much, I take it upon myself to write to you a description of this edifice, hoping to share with you the great blessing of meeting with the friends in those parts and of beholding this Temple which is a testimony of their sacrifice and unity.

As you know, Ishkabad is in Russian Turkestan, just north of the Elbruz mountains, which separate the desert plain of western Turkestan, on the north, from Persia on the south. The city itself lies on the plain a short distance from the mountains, which here are quite

rugged and rocky. The town is quite modern in aspect, being laid off with gardens and broad streets, which meet at right angles. Rows of trees along the sidewalks remind one of a western city, while the buildings and the waterways, which flank the streets and are fed with water coming from the nearby mountains, are strikingly oriental.

I could hardly believe that this city had sprung up almost entirely during the past half-century. It was but a huddle of mud huts, when Baha'o'llah first directed some of his followers to settle there. Now this is replaced by a large and prosperous city of buildings of brick and stone.

The Mashrak-el-Azkar stands in the center of the city, surrounded by a large garden, which is bounded by four streets. It rises high above the surrounding buildings and trees, its dome being visible for miles, as the traveler approaches the city over the plain. The building in plan is a regular polygon of nine sides. One large doorway and portico, flanked by turrets, facing the direction of the Holy City (Akka), forms the principal motive of the facade, while the dome dominates the whole composition.

The walls of the Temple are of brick covered with a firm and hard stucco, [p. 154] which in that climate resists quite well the action of the elements, while the floors are concrete supported by iron or steel beams.

In plan the building is composed of three sections: the central rotunda, the aisle or ambulatory which surrounds it, and the loggia which surrounds the entire building.

The interior of the rotunda is five stories in height. The first or main floor story consists of nine arches, supported by piers, which separate the ambulatory from the rotunda proper. The second story consists of a similar treatment of arches and piers and balustrades, which separate the triforium gallery (which is directly above the ambulatory) from the wall of the rotunda. The third story is decorated with nine flank arcades, between which is a shield upon which is inscribed, in Persian characters, "Ya Baha-el-Abha." The fourth story contains nine large windows, while the wall of the fifth story, which is not as high as the others, is pierced by eighteen bull's-eye windows.

Above, there is the dome which is hemispherical in shape. The rotunda from the floor to the top of the dome is elaborately decorated with fret work and other designs, all in relief. We were told that the ultimate aim was that color and gilding should be added to this interior decoration.

The inner dome is of iron or steel and concrete, while the outer dome or roof is entirely of metal-the intention is that this shall be gilded.

The main portico of the temple is two stories in the clear, while the loggias, which surround the building, are on two floors, the lower being on the main floor level, while the upper one is on the level of the triforium gallery. This upper loggia is reached by two stair-cases, one to the right and one to the left of the main entrance, and the gallery is entered from the loggia.

On the main floor the principal entrance is through the large doorway, but there are also several inner doors, which connect the ambulatory with the loggia. An abundance of light is admitted through the windows in the upper part of the rotunda, as well as through the windows of the upper gallery and ambulatory, which open upon the loggias.

The Persian style of architecture has been used in treating the details and decorations of the buildings. At present the stucco work is not quite completed. The interior of the rotunda is finished, but the decoration of the loggias and gallery and ambulatory is only done in part. However, the work is continuing and it will not be long before all will be complete.

From what I saw and heard in Ishkabad, I found that those believers who superintended the building of the Temple were competent business men and that, although they had undertaken a large enterprise, every possible economy was made, yet at the same time no expense seemed to be spared when necessary for the beauty and solidity of the building.

The layout of the garden is not yet complete. Nine avenues of approach lead to the Temple. The main avenue of the nine, leading to the entrance portico, will be entered from the street by a monumental gateway. Last July they were completing the plans for this principal gateway of the grounds.

At the four corners of the garden are four buildings. One is a school. One is a house, where traveling Bahais are entertained. One is to be used as a hospital, and the other is for workmen, storage, etc. Much of the property in the immediate vicinity of this enclosure belongs to Bahais, so the Mashrak-el-Azkar is the center of the community materially, as well as spiritually.

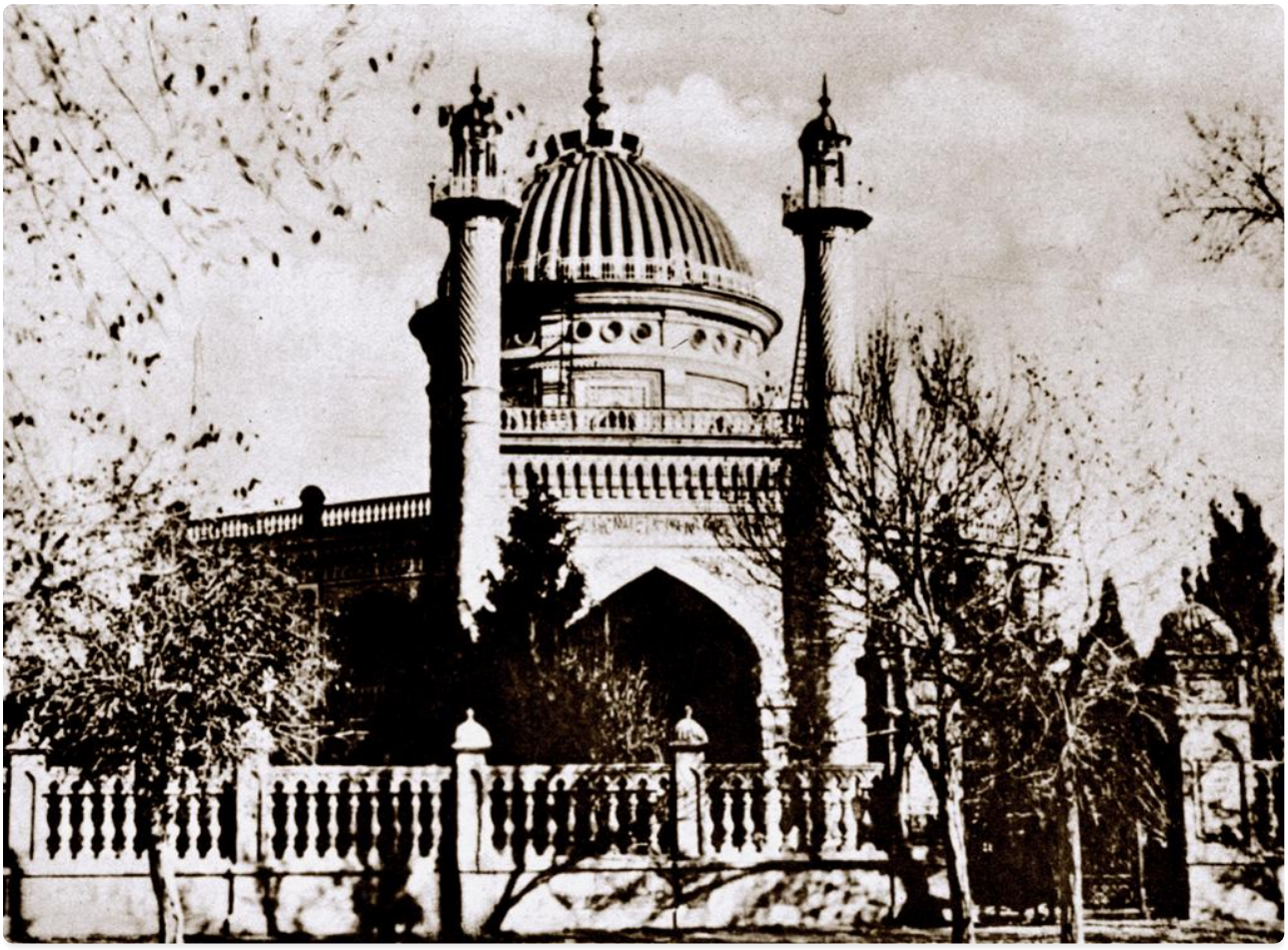
That which impressed me more than all else, as I stood before this Mashrak-el-Azkar, was the fact that the Bahai of the east had all worked with one accord and had given freely toward its erection. The Temple in America can be accomplished only as we give up self and unite in this service. The beloved in the east made their offerings and left them with all personal desires upon the altar of sacrifice. Now we in this country must do likewise. We need something more than money for the Temple. It must be built of the material of

sacrifice and cemented together by the spirit of unity.

In the building of the Temple, every one must lay before God his material offering together with his ideas, desires and aspirations - give them to the Lord completely, and then, as we come together to construct the material building, we will find that we have ample means for the work in hand.

Each one of us has sufficient means, both material and spiritual, for the work which God has given us to perform. We need not trouble thinking that we may not have enough means, but we should seek to apply to the best advantage the means which God has given us.

Faithfully, your brother in the service of Abdul-Baha, Charles Mason Remey.



Comments

February 7. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh in quoting this passage seeks to refute the argument of the Muslims, who attach a purely literal interpretation to this verse of the Qur'an, and therefore consider it as implying bodily resurrection."

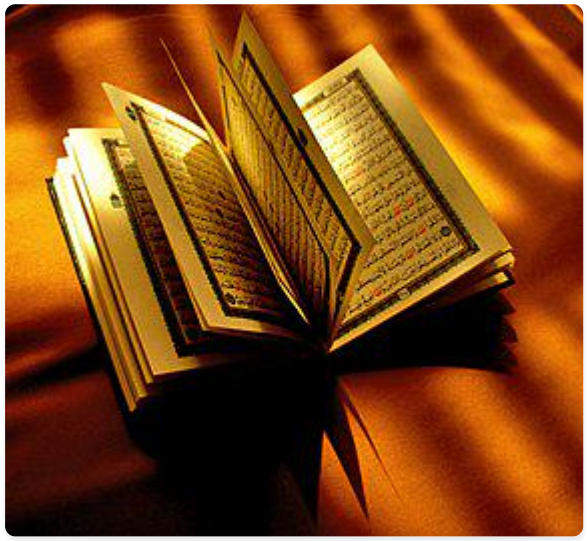
Original file: 0169.html (position #130)

February 7. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh in quoting this passage seeks to refute the argument of the Muslims, who attach a purely literal interpretation to this verse of the Qur'an, and therefore consider it as implying bodily resurrection."

> *1592. Second Time--Means the Spiritual Resurrection of Man*
>
> *"With regard to the Racine Assembly's request for an explanation of the passage on page 231 of the 'Gleanings' beginning with the words: 'From it (earth) have We created you...': this is a verse from the Qur'an... Bahá'u'lláh in quoting this passage*

seeks to refute the argument of the Muslims, who attach a purely literal interpretation to this verse of the Qur'an, and therefore consider it as implying bodily resurrection. To these Muslims He says, you who literally believe that the human body will return to dust and will be raised from it again, and therefore attach so much importance to this mortal world, how then can you wax so proud, and boast over things which are but perishable and consequently void of any true and lasting value."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the Racine Assembly, February 7, 1939: Bahá'í News, No. 124, p. 6, April 1939)



Comments

February 7. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It seems both strange and pitiful that the Church and clergy should always, in every age, be the most bitter opponents of the very Truth they are continually admonishing their followers to be prepared to receive!"

Original file: 0168.html (position #129)

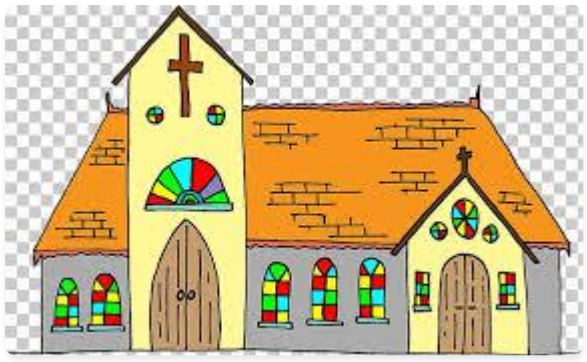
February 7. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It seems both strange and pitiful that the Church and clergy should always, in every age, be the most bitter opponents of the very Truth they are continually admonishing their followers to be prepared to receive!"

> *1383. The Church and the Clergy Often Are the Most Bitter Opponents of the Cause*
>
> *"It seems both strange and pitiful that the Church and clergy should always, in every age, be the most bitter opponents of the very Truth they are continually admonishing their followers to be prepared to receive! They have become so*

violently attached to the form that the substance itself eludes them!

"However, such denunciations as those your minister made publicly against you and the Bahá'í Faith can do no harm to the Cause at all; on the contrary, they only serve to spread its name abroad and mark it as an independent religion."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 7, 1945)



Comments

February 7. On this date in 1910, Charles Mason Remey wrote Corinne True a letter stating "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers."

February 7. On this date in 1910, Charles Mason Remey wrote Corinne True a letter stating "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers."

From *Star of the West*, Volume 1, published March 21, 1910...

> *A letter was received March 9th by Mrs. Corinne True of Chicago, from Mr. C. M. Remey, dated Rangoon, Burmah, February 7, 1910, in which he said: "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers." Also he said if they had no delays they would probably be in Port Said, Egypt, April 1st, and from there go to Acca.*

Comments

February 7. On this date in 1862, the eminent Orientalist Edward Granville Browne was born. He published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá’u’lláh and leave a description of the experience.

February 7. On this date in 1862, the eminent Orientalist Edward Granville Browne was born. He published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá’u’lláh and leave a description of the experience.

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled BROWNE, EDWARD GRANVILLE...

I. Browne's Life and Academic Career

E. G. Browne came of a wealthy family engaged in shipbuilding. He was at first strongly dominated by his father, Sir Benjamin Browne, who sent him to the preparatory school at Glenalmond, to Eton College, and finally to Cambridge University, where he was to study engineering or, as an ultimate compromise, science and medicine. The boy followed his father's wishes and eventually qualified, and for a short time practiced, as a doctor. But at the age of only fifteen, in 1877, his interest in the Middle East had been aroused by the Russo-Turkish War, in which characteristically his sympathy lay with the side that was unpopular in Britain, the Turks. At this point his "Oriental" studies began, with Turkish, to which Persian and Arabic were soon added. He had (and continued to have) little or no interest in philology as such, and his methods seem to have been entirely pragmatic: the autodidactic use of any manuals and texts he could find, consultation with real and pretended experts, and the genial exploitation of various native speakers, who could nearly always be found in England in the great days of empire. The results, to judge by the reports of his contemporaries and his own published work, were stupendously successful.

Upon his graduation in the Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos in 1882, he was "bribed" by his father to persevere in his medical studies with the gift of a summer trip to Istanbul (or, as it was still known in Europe, Constantinople). In 1884, on his own initiative, he also took the so-called "Indian" Languages (in fact, languages of the Islamic world) Tripos at Cambridge. There followed three years of further medical study, internship, and practice, interrupted, whenever the occasion allowed, for pursuit of his private, "Oriental" interests. In 1887 be achieved both his final medical qualifications and a fellowship from his Cambridge college (Pembroke), which enabled him to spend his celebrated year in Iran—for it was by then unquestionably Persian studies that were claiming his main attention. It was this visit that generated the remarkable book, *A Year Amongst the Persians,* which, despite its romantic and archaic title, approach, and style, remains a classic source. It was first published in 1893, after being more than once turned down, and has since been reprinted several times under various auspices (chiefly A. C. Black and Cambridge University Press).

After his return to Britain in 1888, Browne's life was spent almost wholly in Cambridge, remaining outwardly quite unspectacular. He was first University Lecturer in Persian and then, from 1902 until his death, Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic; the latter post was one of two prestigious but ill-paid chairs nominally in the field of Arabic studies then maintained in the university. Until 1906 he lived a vigorous, if somewhat self-centered, social life as a bachelor in his college; in that year he married Alice Blackburne-Daniell, a

well-to-do and influential Roman Catholic, who enlisted his vague but generous sympathies both for Roman Catholicism and for the cause of an independent Ireland. They had two sons, neither of whom followed his father's interests, though later both lent them moral and financial support. Browne suffered a massive heart attack in November, 1924; his wife died in June, 1925, six months before his own death. The last year or so of his life was little more than a gallant holding action.

To appreciate Browne's remarkable academic achievements (as well as some of his peculiar shortcomings) at their proper evaluation, it is necessary to understand something of his personal position and the world in which he lived and worked. He was bred to wealth and status and was (particularly in his mature years) a very rich man in his own right. This meant that his time was largely his own (his statutory duties were minimal) and that he could please himself in virtually everything he did and said. He could choose his own projects, pay for them and their publication if necessary (as it often was), and personally employ such colleagues and helpers (several Iranians among them) as the university would not hire. But this situation carried its disadvantage as well. If he was generous and clever and often charming, he was also egotistical (several tributes bear witness to his fascinating but nearly always one-sided discourse); and, as frequently happens in such cases, his judgment could be willful and erratic and the self-discipline necessary for the finest academic work very difficult to achieve. His almost continuous antagonism to his own government and the establishment (related to general Middle Eastern diplomacy and the Persian "Question," Ireland, South Africa—liberals in those days were pro-Boer—anti-Germanism and concomitant pro-Russian and pro-French policy, inadequate educational measures, and so on) largely does him credit, no doubt; it certainly cost him deserved public recognition and influence. It also, however, sometimes contained elements of the arbitrary and the cranky, and anyone less privileged might well have had cause to be more circumspect. As with most of his contemporaries, all his ways seem to have been firmly set before he reached the age of thirty. He had, too, something in him of upper-class Victorian-Edwardian philistinism: Early in life he engaged in tennis, squash, and rowing, and later he took up fishing, but he had no time for art, music, religion, or indeed for languages or cultures outside his chosen field. His early enthusiasm for Turkish studies soon waned, while for "Indian" culture he seemed to cherish a marked antipathy most of his life, considering it to represent a debased version of all that he loved in Iran. He was no sybarite: Given endless cigarettes and tea, he could apparently easily dispense (for himself and his guests) with good food or wine.

Browne's work in promoting Persian studies was epoch-making, for it must be remembered that in his lifetime (and sometimes still) Islamic studies were conceived, as

the title of his chair suggests, primarily in terms of Arabic. His long-time friend, colleague, and successor R. A. Nicholson, a Persianist of almost equal note, included in his introduction to posthumous *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS belonging to the late E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1932) a memoir and almost complete classified bibliography of fifty-five major items that Browne had published. Although these works cannot all be listed here, some of the largest or most important demand comment.

First, unquestionably, is the monumental *Literary History of Persia,* the four volumes of which appeared in 1902, 1906, 1920, and 1924. It is a work that fully displays Browne's strengths and weaknesses: broad in scope (and ranging far beyond literature as such), dense with nearly always accurate detail, and based almost entirely on original sources (many of which were at that time accessible only to Browne himself) but also diffuse and at times irrelevant (volume I, for example, consists largely of prolegomena, though originally intended to comprise the entire work). It also abounds in examples of Browne's and his society's prejudices, as well as reflecting some unfortunate Iranian cultural attitudes of the time (volume IV, for example, though packed with valuable material, does scant justice to the literature, art, and general high culture of the whole period 1500-1900). Volumes II and III, though now dated in information and approach and selective in interest, are fine pieces of work. The copyright to the whole enterprise, which initially had a checkered publishing history, has long been vested in Cambridge University Press, and reprints have been frequent.

Two of Browne's special concerns gave rise to a considerable number of publications from about 1890 to 1920. These concerns were respectively Babism/Bahaism and what he perceived to be the rise of true liberal democracy in Iran (see ii and iii below, with bibliographies). He also edited, translated, and encouraged others to work on a number of important classical texts that had come to his notice during the preparation of his Literary History. Among the most important of his own contributions are editions of *Tadhkiratu ʾsh-Shuʿará* of Dawlatšāh (1901), *Lubábuʾl-Albáb* of ʿAwfī (with Mīrzā Moḥammad Qazvīnī; 2 vols., 1903, 1906), and in the Gibb Memorial Series *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristán* of Ebn Esfandīār (1905), *Taʾríkh-i-Guzīda* of Mostawfī (2 vols., 1910, 1913), and the revised translation of *Čahār maqāla* of Neẓāmī ʿArūżī (*Cahár Maqála,* 1921). Browne's own interest in such works was not always strictly literary, but his use of them was to prove in the long run most fortunate, for they include fine and often rare examples of medieval Persian prose. One anomalous work, *Arabian Medicine* (1921), the publication of his Fitzpatrick lectures before the Royal College of Physicians, represents a marriage of his enforced earlier studies with his own chosen field of endeavor.

Much of Browne's time and phenomenal energy were channeled into helping individuals and causes or carrying out "chores." He gave personal (including financial) assistance to a great variety of students and to Iranian and other émigrés. His role on the Persia Committee, which endeavored for some years (particularly between 1908 and 1912) to influence the British government and public opinion, was crucial—though the ultimate results were disappointing (see iii below). It did, however, win him high regard in Iran, in addition to the respect he already enjoyed among educated Iranians for his dedicated scholarship. He promoted "Oriental" studies at Cambridge in various ways, especially by encouraging academic training for candidates in the Levant Consular Service and the Egyptian, Sudanese, and Indian civil services. Many academic or quasi-academic figures emerged from this unofficial nursery of talent, among them the late Sir Reader Bullard, Laurence Lockhart, and Sir Ronald Storrs. After the early death of the Turcologist E. J. W. Gibb in 1901, Browne took responsibility for putting a large part of Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry* into final form and seeing it through the press. He was the leading executive and academic figure in publishing the invaluable Gibb Memorial Series, from a fund established by Gibb's family in 1904. Finally, it should be mentioned that he did a great deal of cataloguing work on the rich Islamic collections housed in Cambridge, which culminated in his *Handlist of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1900); a supplementary list published in 1922 also included manuscripts located in the individual colleges.

Mention has already been made of the significant failure of British (and indeed foreign) public and academic authorities to honor Browne as fully as might have been expected in the light of his achievements. The following list includes virtually all the significant marks of recognition that came his way: 1903, Fellow of the British Academy; 1911, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; 1922, Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society; 1921, on his fifty-ninth birthday, an address and presentations from admirers in Iran (where he was also made a member of the Order of the Lion and the Sun); on his sixtieth birthday a festschrift entitled *A Volume of Oriental Essays Presented to E. G. Browne* . . . (ed. Sir T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, 1922) but nicknamed *ʿAjab-nāma* (Book of wonders), as a play on his initials. (Typically, this book drew a sour review or two, which, though aimed at the mediocre quality of some of the articles, must inevitably have spoiled Browne's pleasure in the gesture.) Also on this occasion Browne received further letters and addresses from Iran and a number of Western countries. Ironically, his death gave rise to a host of notices conferring upon him the most extravagant praises.

ii. Browne on Babism and Bahaism

Browne first developed an intense curiosity about Babism when he read Gobineau's account in the summer of 1886, and one of his pursuits during his subsequent year-long sojourn in Iran (1887-88) was making contact with the Babis and gaining access to their manuscripts. Browne deeply admired the heroism of the Babis in the revolutionary period 1848-52, found a "sublime beauty" even in the Bab's more ungrammatical writings, and was impressed by Gobineau's account of the Babi leader Ṣobḥ-e Azal. He was thus rather taken aback to discover, upon making contact with "Babis" in Iran, that almost all had become Bahais, followers of Azal's older half-brother Bahāʾ-Allāh, who had replaced the *Bayān* with the *Aqdas* (Browne, 1889, pp. 486-87, 901, 933; idem, 1893, repr. 1926, pp. 328-29).

In true nineteenth-century style, Browne was after the pristine origins of the movement, considering later developments to be departures. He thus considered the Azalīs more reliable than the Bahais in putting him in touch with the Babi past and regretted the rivalry between the two groups. He seems early on to have taken the Azalī side in the struggle; when Iranian Bahais reproached him for inclining to Azal, he did not deny it and blamed Bahai violence toward Azalīs (1893, repr. 1926, pp. 578-79). In his 1889 papers for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* he set out for the first time in English a detailed account of the evolution of Babism and the rise of Bahaism after 1850. He entered into frequent correspondence with Azal and his followers and in the spring of 1890 voyaged to Cyprus, where he spent two weeks with Azal, then to ʿAkkā (Acre), where he spent a week with the Bahais.

Among Browne's Azalī contacts in Istanbul was Shaikh Aḥmad Rūḥī, who told him late in 1890 about a manuscript entitled *Hašt behest*, a polemic against Bahaism. Although this book had just been written by Rūḥī himself and Āqā Khan Kermānī, both sons-in-law of Azal, Rūḥī misrepresented it as the work of Āqā Javād Karbalāʾī, an eyewitness to events of early Babism. Karbalāʾī had become a Bahai, but Rūḥī told Browne that he had been an Azalī. Browne was at first excited by Hašt behešt, wrongly considering it a primary source for early Babi history and a vindication of Azal's right to head Babism after the Bab's death (1892, pp. 680-84, reporting Rūḥī's correspondence); he much later came to realize the true authorship of *Hašt behest* (idem, 1932, p. 76, para. 1; for more recent scholarship on this work and on Kermānī, see Bayat, pp. 160-61).

At ʿAkkā Browne had acquired a copy of the account of Babi and Bahai history by Bahāʾ-Allāh's son ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ, which he published with a translation and extensive annotation, as *A Traveller's Narrative* in 1891. Browne spoke highly of Bahāʾ-Allāh and ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ in his introduction to this work, but the notes (II, pp. 356-73), written later, show a

willingness to believe charges that Bahāʾ-Allāh had ordered some of his enemies assassinated; this later attitude was much influenced by the anti-Bahai calumnies of *Hašt-behešt*.

In 1893 Browne published an English translation of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Hamadānī's *Tārīḵ-ejadīd,* a late pro-Bahai account of the Babi period. Again his notes to this work betray an implicit belief that even late Azalī accounts of Babi history are somehow more authentic than Bahai accounts, whereas in fact both represent evolution away from the original ideas of pristine Babism. But Browne's interest in this subject was fading, and he turned later in the 1890s to his literary history of Iran, to which he devoted the rest of his life. His enthusiasm for the study of Babism waned for several reasons. An Oxford Magazine review (25 May 1892, p. 394) attacking his work on this topic as a waste of time stung him deeply. In addition, the constant polemics between Azalīs and Bahais pained him, as did those between partisans of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ and those of his brothers after Bahāʾ-Allāh's death.

When Browne became caught up in the Constitutional Revolution in 1905-11, he showed some peripheral interest in whether or not the small minority of Azalī's and Bahais were participants. He concluded, however, that the Bahais, with their emphasis on world unity, were too cosmopolitan to be good nationalists, and he thought Iran needed nationalists at that point (Browne, 1910, pp. 424-29). In 1910 he published, at the urging and with the cooperation of the Shiʿite scholar Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Qazvīnī, the manuscript of *Ketāb-e noqṭat al-kāf*, which they attributed to Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī, an early Babi who had perished in 1852. Qazvīnī wrote the Persian introduction, and Browne wrote an English preface, in which he attacked the Bahais for attempting to rewrite history (in *Tārīḵ-ejadīd*) in order to lessen the importance of the Bab in favor of Bahāʾ-Allah and accused them of suppressing *Noqṭat al-kāf*. Although it is true that this manuscript probably circulated infrequently among Bahais, the many copies of it in Bahai collections in Iran and in Haifa demonstrate that they hardly suppressed it. Furthermore, some material and attitudes expressed in *Noqṭat al-kāf* certainly postdate 1852. The work should probably be recognized, therefore, not as the "original" history, which the *Tārīḵ-ejadīd* was meant to supplant, but as an alternative tradition about early Babism, containing primary material but redacted from an Azalī point of view before the final break between Azal and Bahāʾ-Allāh. Mīrzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegānī and other Bahai scholars replied to Browne that they had seen Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī's early chronicle of Babism and that *Noqṭat al-kāf* was not it. A number of Azalīs and Bahais wrote or published important memoirs or chronicles in response to this publication of *Noqṭat al-kāf*; Browne deposited those sent to him in his collection but wrote nothing about them (Balyuzi, pp. 70, 72-73; Browne Coll., Cambridge University, F. 57[9] "Resāla-ye Sayyed Mehdī Dahajī"; Mīrzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegānī and

Mehdī Golpāyegānī, *Kašf al-ḡeṭā',* Tashkent, 1919).

Browne's last substantial work on Babism was the publication of a miscellany of essentially unedited materials, some of them translations, entitled *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (1918). He also included a few specimens of Babi and Bahai poetry in the fourth volume of his *Literary History of Persia* (1924) and remarked favorably on the crisp style of Bahā'-Allāh's *Ketāb-e īqān*. His obituary of 'Abd-al-Bahā', written in 1921, was, in contrast to the rather tense communications of a decade earlier, warm and appreciative and showed admiration for his promotion of racial unity in the segregated United States.

iii. Browne and the Persian Constitutional Movement

E. G. Browne was incomparably more sympathetic and devoted to the Persian Constitutional movement than was any other European. Through his numerous publications, his lectures, and the letters he published in daily newspapers, he took an active part in organizing and influencing British opinion. The Persia Committee, founded in October, 1908, by Browne and H. F. B. Lynch and composed of prominent members of both houses of Parliament, as well as writers and journalists, functioned as an active and influential pressure group both inside and outside England.

Browne's deep interest in politics had begun in the early years of his life. His admiration for the Turks in their losing struggle against Russia in the war of 1877-78 first attracted his attention to the East. It was this political commitment to weaker nations struggling against political and military penetration by the European powers that led him to begin learning Turkish, followed by Arabic and Persian, and thus laid the foundations for his brilliant academic career (see i above). Nevertheless, Persia soon supplanted Turkey as the focus of his interest and came to dominate not only his scholarly but also his political activities. He admired the "stability of national type, and power of national recovery" of Persia throughout its long history and was fascinated by such ideals as the "interdependence of all mankind" and the "obligation of tolerance towards those of other religions" that he discovered in the classical Persian epics (Browne, 1917-18, pp. 312, 313).

His own profound and humane yearning for a "universal brotherhood of mankind" (Nicholson, p. viii) corresponded to the basic principles of the Babi and Bahai religions (see ii above). It was this same deep-rooted humanitarianism, rather than any reasoned theory of nationalism, that led Browne to identify himself with popular movements striving for liberty. Independent in forming his views and fearless in expressing them, he generally found himself in opposition to the official policy of his government (see i above). His belief in a plurality of nations, each preserving its distinctive character, all coexisting freely and

aiding one another, was decisive in his special dedication to the Persian cause. His manifold writings on the Constitutional movement, as well as his publication of its authentic documents, were aimed at arousing sympathy for the Persian reformers (Browne, 1909, p. 5). He asserted the Persians' right of self-determination (1917-18, p. 320) and consistently deplored the means employed by England and Russia to crush the movement, especially revealing the atrocities committed by the Russians in Persia (1912a, pp. 6, 15; 1912b). A vehement opponent of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which had established Russian and British zones of influence in Persia, Browne demanded complete abolition of these zones (1917-18, p. 329), comparing partition of Persia with that of Poland (1912a, p. 17). He perceived the Constitutional movement as essentially a nationalist, rather than a democratic (1917-18, p. 323), cause, and the Persians thus fighting for their very existence as a nation (1910, p. xix).

Browne was able to obtain valuable information for his publications from the best sources available. He was not only acquainted with Jamāl-al-Dīn Afḡānī and Mīrzā Malkom Khan but also knew many of the national leaders who had been exiled to France and England after the bombardment of Parliament by Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah in 1908, among whom Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda, ʿAlī-Akbar Dehḵodā, and Moḥammad-ʿAlī Tarbīat were the most prominent. Browne was also kept well informed by correspondents in St. Petersburg and some of his former students who had entered the British consular service.

The events in Persia were of such importance to Browne that he even discontinued work on his monumental *Literary History of Persia*, the second volume of which had just been published (1906), in order to dedicate himself fully to organizing support and assistance. Indignant with the manner in which the British foreign minister, Edward Grey, was conducting affairs in Iran, the Persia Committee, with Browne as its vice-chairman, published resolutions, staged large public meetings, and pressed for Russian withdrawal from Persia. By 1911 the executive committee consisted of forty-six members, among them thirty-three Radical members of Parliament, who subjected the House of Commons to sustained debates on Persian affairs. During 1911-12 Persia was the central issue in a general "Grey must go" campaign. To all such activities pamphlets published by Browne were fundamental.

In addition to his political work, Browne did not neglect the literary aspects of the Constitutional movement, which were attractively presented in *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*. This account of the flourishing of a free press, as well as the large quantity of excellent patriotic and political verse included, was aimed at counterbalancing the "reactionary and obscurantist policy" of *The Times*, which had criticized the "mischievous

and dangerous" character of the free press in Iran (Browne, 1914, p. xii), and at refuting those who sought for political reasons to represent the Persians as decadent and incapable of governing themselves (Browne, 1910, p. xii; idem, 1914, p. xv; idem, 1909, p. 6). In particular, he emphasized the work of the secret and semisecret societies (*anjomans*) established during the revolutionary period, which provided free education in night schools, arranged for medical treatment, and organized lectures on the duties of citizenship (1909, pp. 13, 21; 1910, pp. 244-46).

Browne was held in the highest esteem by Persians. Although he had at first been disliked in Iran because of his sympathies for the persecuted Babis, he soon evoked gratitude for having taken Persia and its literature as his own and for supporting the Persian people as few others had done. To all Persians living in exile he was of infinite help and utmost generosity. When Tabrīz was occupied by the Russians in 1911, the Constitutionalists sent telegrams asking for his assistance. As for his services to Persian literature, a contemporary Persian newspaper article compared them to the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd's patronage of Ferdowsī (quoted by E. D. Ross in his introduction to the 1926 edition of Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. xix-xx). Browne was awarded the Persian order of the Lion and the Sun, and on his sixtieth birthday he received Persian representatives who presented him with a moving illuminated address from his admirers in Iran (Arberry, p. 189). Persians today still remember Browne as one of the great men devoted to their country and its people.

Comments

February 7. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "no objection to the word 'Missionary' appearing on your Passport... 'missionary' a Bahá'í pioneer is... a narrow-minded, bigoted type of proselytizing quite alien to the Bahá'í method of spreading our teachings."

Original file: 0165.html (position #126)

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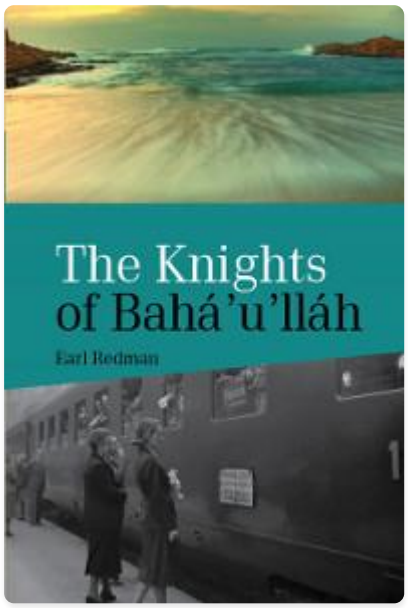
> *1962. In the Best and Highest Sense of the Term "Missionary" It Can Be Applied to Our Teachers--There is No Objection to the Word Appearing on Passports*
>
> *"He sees no objection to the word 'Missionary' appearing on your Passport as long*

> *as it is clearly understood what kind of a 'missionary' a Bahá'í pioneer is. In the best and highest sense of the term it certainly could be applied to our teachers. Unfortunately this word has often been associated with a narrow-minded, bigoted type of proselytizing quite alien to the Bahá'í method of spreading our teachings."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 7, 1945)*



Comments

February 7. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote Wellesley Tudor Pole "I have had a long talk with Col. Symes" regarding the right of access to Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji by Mandate authorities to Bahá'ís and Covenant-breakers alike.

Original file: 0164.html (position #125)

February 7. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote Wellesley Tudor Pole "I have had a long talk with Col. Symes" regarding the right of access to Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji by Mandate authorities to Bahá'ís and Covenant-breakers alike.

From the chapter titled *'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension and Its Immediate Consequences* in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*...

> *The matter which concerned Shoghi Effendi most, however, was the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji. The keys of the inner Tomb were still held by the authorities; the right of access to other parts of the Shrine was accorded Bahá'ís and Covenant-breakers alike; the Bahá'í custodian looked after it as before, and any decision seemed in a state of abeyance. Shoghi Effendi never rested until, through*

representations he made to the authorities, backed by insistent pressure from Bahá'ís all over the world, he succeeded in getting the custody of the Holy Tomb back into his own hands. On February 7, 1923, he wrote to Tudor Pole: "I have had a long talk with Col. Symes and have fully explained to him the exact state of affairs, the unmistakable and overwhelming voice of all the Bahá'í Community and their unshakeable determination to stand by the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Recently he sent a message to Muhammad 'Ali requiring from him the sum of œ108 for the expenses of the policeman, contending that he being the aggressor is liable to this expense. So far he has not complied with this request and I await future developments with great anxiety."

The following day Shoghi Effendi received this telegram from his cousin, who was in Jerusalem:

> *His Eminence Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, Haifa.*
>
> *Letter received immediate steps taken the final decision by the High Commissioner is in our favour the key is yours.*

The letter referred to was one written by Sir Gilbert Clayton, Chief Secretary of the Palestine Administration, to the High Commissioner. Shoghi Effendi, in another letter to Tudor Pole, informed him that he was on very warm terms with the Governor of Haifa, Col. G. Stewart Symes and had met Sir Gilbert; it was no doubt due to these contacts that the authorities decided in favour of the Guardian and the key was officially returned to the legitimate Bahá'í keeper of the Shrine, from whom it had been wrested by force over a year before.

Though the safety of the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world was now assured once and for all time, the house Bahá'u'lláh had occupied in Bagdad was still in the hands of the Shi'ah enemies of the Faith, and continues to be so until the present day; the battle to get it back into Bahá'í custody was to worry and to exercise Shoghi Effendi for many years.

Comments

February 7. On this date in 1977, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer stated "As for the status of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Faith, he is not considered by Bahá'ís to be a prophet, minor or otherwise."

Original file: 0163.html (position #124)

February 7. On this date in 1977, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer stated "As for the status of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Faith, he is not considered by Bahá'ís to be a prophet, minor or otherwise."

The Bahá'í notion of progressive revelation exlcudes many key figures who have generated significant religious movements, whether in the distant past like Confucius or Lao-Tzu or in the 19th Century like Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Joseph Smith. All religious founders are not universally accepted as prophets.

Comments

February 7. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice announced the selection of a design for its permanent seat. The Seat of Universal House of Justice was designed by architect Hossein Amanat, who also designed the International Teaching Centre Building, the Centre for the Study of t

Original file: 0162.html (position #123)

February 7. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice announced the selection of a design for its permanent seat. The Seat of Universal House of Justice was designed by architect Hossein Amanat, who also designed the International Teaching Centre Building, the Centre for the Study of the Sacred Texts, and the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa. Hossein Amanat is the brother of Abbas Amanat, the former Bahá'í who is Professor of History & International Studies at Yale University.

> *The Universal House of Justice 7 February 1974*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE ACCEPTANCE EXQUISITE DESIGN CONCEIVED BY ḤUSAYN AMÁNAT FOR BUILDING TO SERVE AS PERMANENT SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE MOUNT CARMEL. DECISION MADE TO PROCEED NEGOTIATE CONTRACTS CONSTRUCTION THIS NOBLE EDIFICE SECOND THOSE BUILDINGS DESTINED ARISE AROUND ARC CONSTITUTE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER BAHÁ'Í WORLD.*
>
> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

Comments

February 8. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice responded to an individual inquiring about "methods followed in researching, understanding and writing about historical events."

Original file: 0161.html (position #122)

February 8. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice responded to an individual inquiring about "methods followed in researching, understanding and writing about historical events."

8 February 1998

Your email of ... covers a number of issues, the first of which relates to methods followed in researching, understanding and writing about historical events, and the elements of these methods which the House of Justice regards as being influenced by materialism. The purpose of scholarship in such fields should obviously be the ascertainment of truth, and Bahá'í scholars should, of course, observe the highest standards of honesty, integrity and truthfulness. Moreover, the House of Justice accepts that many scholarly methods have been developed which are soundly based and of enduring validity. It nevertheless questions some presumptions of certain current academic methods because it sees these producing a distorted picture of reality.

The training of some scholars in fields such as religion and history seems to have restricted their vision and blinded them to the culturally determined basis of elements of the approach they have learned. It causes them to exclude from consideration factors which, from a Bahá'í point of view, are of fundamental importance. Truth in such fields cannot be found if the evidence of Revelation is systematically excluded and if discourse is limited by a basically deterministic view of the world.

Some of the protagonists in the discussions on the Internet have implied that the only way to attain a true understanding of historical events and of the purport of the sacred and historical records of the Cause of God is through the rigid application of methods narrowly defined in a materialistic framework. They have even gone so far as to stigmatize whoever proposes a variation of these methods as wishing to obscure the truth rather than unveil it.

The House of Justice recognizes that, at the other extreme, there are Bahá'ís who, imbued by what they conceive to be loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh, cling to blind acceptance of what they understand to be a statement of the Sacred Text. This shortcoming demonstrates an equally serious failure to grasp the profundity of the Bahá'í principle of the harmony of faith and reason. The danger of such an attitude is that it exalts personal understanding of some part of the Revelation over the whole, leads to illogical and internally inconsistent applications of the Sacred Text, and provides fuel to those who would mistakenly characterize loyalty to the Covenant as "fundamentalism".

It is not surprising that individual Bahá'ís hold and express different and sometimes defective understandings of the Teachings; this is but an evidence of the magnitude of the change that this Revelation is to effect in human consciousness. As believers with various insights into the Teachings converse — with patience, tolerance and open and unbiased minds — a deepening of comprehension should take place. The strident insistence on individual views, however, can lead to contention, which is detrimental not only to the spirit of Bahá'í association and collaboration but to the search for truth itself.

Beyond contention, moreover, is the condition in which a person is so immovably attached to one erroneous viewpoint that his insistence upon it amounts to an effort to change the essential character of the Faith. This kind of behaviour, if permitted to continue unchecked, could produce disruption in the Bahá'í community, giving birth to countless sects as it has done in previous Dispensations. The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh prevents this. The Faith defines elements of a code of conduct, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the Universal House of Justice, in watching over the security of the Cause and upholding the integrity of its Teachings, to require the friends to adhere to standards thus defined.

The Universal House of Justice does not see itself obliged to prescribe a new scientific methodology for Bahá'í academics who make study of the Faith, its teachings and history the subject of their professional activities. Rather has it concentrated on drawing the attention of these friends to the inadequacy of certain approaches from a Bahá'í point of view, urging them to apply to their work the concept which they accept as Bahá'ís: that the Manifestation of God is of a higher realm and has a perception far above that of any human being. He has the task of raising humankind to a new level of knowledge and behaviour. In this, His understanding transcends the traditions and concepts of the society in which He appears. As Bahá'u'lláh Himself writes in the Hidden Words: O Son of Beauty! By My spirit and by My favor! By My mercy and by My beauty! All that I have revealed unto thee with the tongue of power, and have written for thee with the pen of might, hath been in accordance with thy capacity and understanding, not with My state and the melody of My voice.

Although, in conveying His Revelation, the Manifestation uses the language and culture of the country into which He is born, He is not confined to using terminology with the same connotations as those given to it by His predecessors or contemporaries; He delivers His message in a form which His audience, both immediate and in centuries to come, is capable of grasping. It is for Bahá'í scholars to elaborate, over a period of time, methodologies which will enable them to perform their work with this understanding. This is a challenging task, but not one which should be beyond the scope of Bahá'ís who are learned in the Teachings as well as competent in their scientific disciplines.

This brings us to the specific points raised in your email of ... As you well understand, not only the right but also the responsibility of each believer to explore truth for himself or herself are fundamental to the Bahá'í teachings. This principle is an integral feature of the coming of age of humankind, inseparable from the social transformation to which Bahá'u'lláh is calling the peoples of the world. It is as relevant to specifically scholarly activity as it is to the rest of spiritual and intellectual life. Every human being is ultimately responsible to God for the use which he or she makes of these possibilities; conscience is never to be coerced, whether by other individuals or institutions.

Conscience, however, is not an unchangeable absolute. One dictionary definition, although not covering all the usages of the term, presents the common understanding of the word "conscience" as "the sense of right and wrong as regards things for which one is responsible; the faculty or principle which pronounces upon the moral quality of one's actions or motives, approving the right and condemning the wrong".

The functioning of one's conscience, then, depends upon one's understanding of right and

wrong; the conscience of one person may be established upon a disinterested striving after truth and justice, while that of another may rest on an unthinking predisposition to act in accordance with that pattern of standards, principles and prohibitions which is a product of his social environment. Conscience, therefore, can serve either as a bulwark of an upright character or can represent an accumulation of prejudices learned from one's forebears or absorbed from a limited social code.

A Bahá'í recognizes that one aspect of his spiritual and intellectual growth is to foster the development of his conscience in the light of divine Revelation — a Revelation which, in addition to providing a wealth of spiritual and ethical principles, exhorts man "to free himself from idle fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye". This process of development, therefore, involves a clear-sighted examination of the conditions of the world with both heart and mind. A Bahá'í will understand that an upright life is based upon observance of certain principles which stem from Divine Revelation and which he recognizes as essential for the well-being of both the individual and society. In order to uphold such principles, he knows that, in certain cases, the voluntary submission of the promptings of his own personal conscience to the decision of the majority is a conscientious requirement, as in wholeheartedly accepting the majority decision of an Assembly at the outcome of consultation.

In the discussion of wisdom in your email of ... you observe that maybe "Bahá'í academics all too often have not recognized that to a great extent failure to exercise wisdom represents a failure of love." The House of Justice agrees that the exercise of wisdom calls for a measure of love and the development of a sensitive conscience. These, in turn, involve not only devotion to a high standard of uprightness, but also consideration of the effects of one's words and actions.

A Bahá'í's duty to pursue an unfettered search after truth should lead him to understand the Teachings as an organic, logically coherent whole, should cause him to examine his own ideas and motives, and should enable him to see that adherence to the Covenant, to which he is a party, is not blind imitation but conscious choice, freely made and freely followed.

In many of His utterances, `Abdu'l-Bahá extols governments which uphold freedom of conscience for their citizens. As can be seen from the context, these statements refer to the freedom to follow the religion of one's choice. In the original of a passage to which you refer in your email of ..., He gives the following analysis of freedom. There are three types of freedom. The first is divine freedom, which is one of the inherent attributes of the Creator

for He is unconstrained in His will, and no one can force Him to change His decree in any matter whatsoever....

The second is the political freedom of Europeans, which leaves the individual free to do whatsoever he desires as long as his action does not harm his neighbour. This is natural freedom, and its greatest expression is seen in the animal world. Observe these birds and notice with what freedom they live. However much man may try, he can never be as free as an animal, because the existence of order acts as an impediment to freedom.

The third freedom is that which is born of obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Almighty. This is the freedom of the human world, where man severs his affections from all things. When he does so, he becomes immune to all hardship and sorrow. Wealth or material power will not deflect him from moderation and fairness, neither will poverty or need inhibit him from showing forth happiness and tranquillity. The more the conscience of man develops, the more will his heart be free and his soul attain unto happiness. In the religion of God, there is freedom of thought because God, alone, controls the human conscience, but this freedom should not go beyond courtesy. In the religion of God, there is no freedom of action outside the law of God. Man may not transgress this law, even though no harm is inflicted on one's neighbour. This is because the purpose of Divine law is the education of all — others as well as oneself — and, in the sight of God, the harm done to one individual or to his neighbour is the same and is reprehensible in both cases. Hearts must possess the fear of God. Man should endeavour to avoid that which is abhorrent unto God. Therefore, the freedom that the laws of Europe offer to the individual does not exist in the law of God. Freedom of thought should not transgress the bounds of courtesy, and actions, likewise, should be governed by the fear of God and the desire to seek His good pleasure.

Education of the individual Bahá'í in the Divine law is one of the duties of Spiritual Assemblies. In a letter to a National Assembly on 1 March 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote: The deepening and enrichment of the spiritual life of the individual believer, his increasing comprehension of the essential verities underlying this Faith, his training in its administrative processes, his understanding of the fundamentals of the Covenants established by its Author and the authorized Interpreter of its teachings, should be made the supreme objectives of the national representatives responsible for the edification, the progress and consolidation of these communities.

Such is the duty resting on the elected institutions of the Faith for the promotion of the spiritual, moral and ethical lives of the individual believers. Parallel with this, the Bahá'í Faith upholds the freedom of conscience which permits a person to follow his chosen religion: no one may be compelled to become a Bahá'í, or to remain a Bahá'í if he

conscientiously wishes to leave the Faith. As to the thoughts of the Bahá'ís themselves — that is those who have chosen to follow the religion of Bahá'u'lláh — the institutions do not busy themselves with what individual believers think unless those thoughts become expressed in actions which are inimical to the basic principles and vital interests of the Faith.

With regard to the accusation that to make such distinctions borders on restriction of the freedom of speech, one should accept that civil society has long recognized that utterance can metamorphose into behaviour, and has taken steps to protect itself and its citizens against such behaviour when it becomes socially destructive. Laws against sedition and hate-mongering are examples that come readily to mind.

It will surely be clear to you from the above comments that the categories of "issues of doctrinal heresy which must therefore be suppressed" and "the imposition of orthodoxy on the Bahá'í community", to which you refer, are concepts essentially drawn from the study of Christianity and are inapplicable to the far more complex interrelationships and principles established by the Bahá'í Faith.

It is important for all those Bahá'ís who are engaged in the academic study of the Bahá'í Faith to address the theoretical problems which undoubtedly exist, while refusing to be distracted by insidious and unscholarly attacks and calumnies which may periodically be injected into their discussions by the ill-intentioned. Discussion with those who sincerely raise problematic issues, whether they be Bahá'ís or not, and whether — if the latter — they disagree with Bahá'í teachings, can be beneficial and enlightening. However, to continue dialogue with those who have shown a fixed antagonism to the Faith, and have demonstrated their imperviousness to any ideas other than their own, is usually fruitless and, for the Bahá'ís who take part, can be burdensome and even spiritually corrosive.

The problem which aroused the concern of the House of Justice, and has been the subject of a number of communications, was the systematic corruption of Bahá'í discourse in certain of the Internet discussion groups, a design which became increasingly apparent to many of the Bahá'í participants and whose first victim, if it were to succeed, would be Bahá'í scholarship itself. The element which exacerbated a dispute which had been simmering during the past two decades and erupted on the Internet was the participation of some persons who, while nominally Bahá'ís, cherished their own programs and designed to make use of the Bahá'í Cause for the advancement of these programs. To this end they strove to change the essential characteristics of that Cause. This behaviour has been abundantly confirmed by statements made and actions taken by certain of the involved individuals

since they withdrew from the Bahá'í community. They sought to use the language, the occasions and the credibility of scholarly activity to lend a counterfeit authority to a private enterprise which was essentially ideological in nature and self-motivated in origin. Even if their original aims were idealistic in nature — no matter how ill-informed and erroneous in concept — they had evolved in practice into an assault on the Covenant which Bahá'u'lláh has created as a stronghold within which His Cause would evolve as He intends. The purpose of some of those responsible would seem to be that, by diminishing the station of Bahá'u'lláh — a disservice done to previous Manifestations by people similarly inclined —, by casting doubt on the authority conferred on `Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, and by calling into question the integrity of Bahá'í administrative processes, they would be able to persuade a number of unwary followers that the Bahá'í Faith is in fact not a Divine Revelation but a kind of socio-political system being manipulated by ambitious individuals.

Your own familiarity with these same persons' behaviour will have provided you with ample illustration of the violence being done by their public and private statements to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, which they profess to honour, and to the cause of scholarship, which they profess to serve. We cannot separate method from spirit and character. In The Secret of Divine Civilization, `Abdu'l-Bahá gives the standard for the "spiritually learned" whom He describes as "skilled physicians for the ailing body of the world" and "the sure antidote to the poison that has corrupted human society": For every thing, however, God has created a sign and symbol, and established standards and tests by which it may be known. The spiritually learned must be characterized by both inward and outward perfections; they must possess a good character, an enlightened nature, a pure intent, as well as intellectual power, brilliance and discernment, intuition, discretion and foresight, temperance, reverence, and a heartfelt fear of God. For an unlit candle, however great in diameter and tall, is no better than a barren palm tree or a pile of dead wood.

Comments

February 8. On this date in 2001, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice about the Muslim practice of takfir, declaring someone an unbeliever, whether this is practiced in the Baha'i Faith, and questions related to "church and state."

Original file: 0160.html (position #121)

February 8. On this date in 2001, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice about the Muslim practice of takfir, declaring someone an unbeliever, whether this is practiced in the Baha'i Faith, and questions related to "church and state."

Takfir, declaration of unbelief: includes excerpts from Risáliy-i-Siyasiyyih by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 2001-04-18 1. Letter from Ron House to the Universal House of Justice Date: Thu, 08 Feb 2001 To The Universal House of Justice.

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Some current issues in the Bahá'í community are of concern to me, and

My first concern is actions such as the expulsion of Ms. ... from the

Although I am curious about your reasons for this, my questions are c
The practice of takfir in Islam was the declaration that a Muslim (wh

I believe that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was saying, in the letter to Mirza Abu'l-

Given the Arabic words involved, I would translate the passage this w

"O friends! In the Cause of God there [is] no ruling that someone has

[The Persian is: Dar di:n Allah "takfi:r" wa "tafsi:q" nabudih wa ni

Declaring a born Bahá'í or a convert to the faith to have departed fr
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[Note: I have inserted the word "is" into Mr. Cole's translation at a point where it appears to have been omitted due to a typographical error. -R.H.]

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My first three questions concern the above material as it concerns s
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Is the above-mentioned letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá genuine, as asserted by Mr. Cole?

If it is genuine, then does it prohibit the kind of action that you took against Ms. ...?

If it is genuine but does not prohibit action of the kind you took against Ms. ..., then in what way is Mr. Cole's analysis or translation of the letter incorrect or inapplicable to such situations? Please note that although I use Ms. ... case as an example, these questions do not refer specifically to it, but are general questions about the principles applying to any situation in which you declare a person to be not a Bahá'í. If your reply is that, by its nature, these things can only be decided on a case-by-case basis and not in accordance with principles and laws, then I draw your attention to the following statement, and I ask you whether it is genuine and correctly translated: "By its nature, human society needs rules and relationships. For without these ties, security and protection cannot be had, nor can security or prosperity. In their absence, the sacred honor of human beings is nowhere in evidence, and the beloved of hopes remains invisible. The country and the clime would

never be populated, nor would cities and villages be arranged and embellished." 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Treatise on Leadership" (trans Juan R. I. Cole, http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~bahai/trans/vol2/absiyasi.htm)

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My final questions concern religious involvement in government. In yo
"Similarly, Shoghi Effendi's explanation of Bahá'u'lláh's vision of t

I believe I understand this comment correctly as a statement by you t
Source: Majmu'ih-'i Makatib-i Hadrat-i 'Abdu'l-Bahá ("Collected Lette
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'Abdu'l-Bahá, letter of circa 1899.

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You asked about the wisdom of putting the house of justice in charge

Further, in the "Treatise on Leadership" mentioned and referenced abo
The function of the religious leaders and the duties of the clerical

Were you to refer to history, you would find innumerable, and, indeed

Note that in the blessed verse quoted above as well as in the clear s
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Similarly, Bahá'u'lláh writes (Gleanings page 304): "... your Lord hath committed the world and the cities thereof to the care of the kings of the earth.... He hath refused to reserve for Himself any share whatever of this world's dominion."

And also (Gleanings page 241): "The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath bestowed the government of the earth upon the kings. .... That which He hath reserved for Himself are the cities of men's hearts..."

And again (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh pages 220-221): "O ye the loved ones and the trustees of God! Kings are the manifestations of the power, and the daysprings of the might and riches, of God. Pray ye on their behalf. He hath invested them with the rulership of the earth, and hath singled out the hearts of men as His Own domain." (Note that this passage is addressed by implication to the members of the Houses of Justice, for Bahá'u'lláh writes "It behoveth them to regard themselves as the trusted ones [i.e. "trustees" — RH] of the Merciful [i.e. God] among men...")

My questions regarding these passages are: Are the unofficial translations excerpted above genuine and correctly translated?

If so, in the light of these passages, why is it unreasonable to infer that "separation of church and state" is somehow a principle that Bahá'u'lláh intended? It is clear that some of the passages here discuss the Islamic dispensation, but if 'Abdu'l-Bahá intended Bahá'ís to act entirely contrary to the principles He states above, it is strange that He should end this tablet with a reference to this dispensation and to the future:

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"Divine friends, the divine law has an era of youth, and the wondrous

I look forward to your reply and to any additional light you may be a

Thanking you, — Ron House
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1. Response from the Universal House of Justice to Ron House 18 April 2001 Mr. Ron House

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

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The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 8 Fe

You have sought guidance on the matters which are causing you difficu

The first issue you have raised concerns a brief excerpt from a Table

This matter is readily clarified by studying an authorized translatio
 O ye beloved of the Lord! The Cause of God hath never had any place

 Let not these very words be a pretext for dispute and contention. Th
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Mr. Ron House 18 April 2001 Page 2

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The three sentences at the beginning of this passage constitute the

It is clear that this passage refers to the prescribed conduct of ir
Love is the standard which must govern the conduct of one believer t
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(Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File, Helen Hornby, rd comp., 3 rev. ed. (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 403)

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... There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administratior
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(ibid., p. 77)

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The duty of deciding whether a person satisfies the qualifications c

The second issue causing you concern is that of relating other excer
Ye have asked concerning the wisdom of referring certain important l
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Mr. Ron House 18 April 2001 Page 3

men. The purpose is that beings that are veiled may see, and that dark and defective realities may become illumined.

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All other ordinances are subservient to faith, certitude, confidence

Let it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decis

Say, O People: Verily the Supreme House of Justice is under the wing

Briefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the

The extract presented on the Internet is that translated and appear:
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Mr. Ron House 18 April 2001 Page 4

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 You have referred also to a number of extracts from Risaliy-i-Siyas

 The House of Justice trusts that you will find these clarifications
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
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Enclosure 3. Extracts from Risaliy-i-Siyasiyyih Human society is by nature in need of binding rules and relationships, for otherwise it would not experience peace and protection, nor enjoy happiness and security. Without them, the sacred glory of the human condition would not be unveiled and the desire of all hearts would remain unrealized. The country would not prosper, and its cities and villages would not find order and arrangement.

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The duty of the doctors and divines is, however, to attend to the mat

Were ye to refer to history, ye would find countless similar instance

Observe that both this blessed verse and explicit tradition are absol
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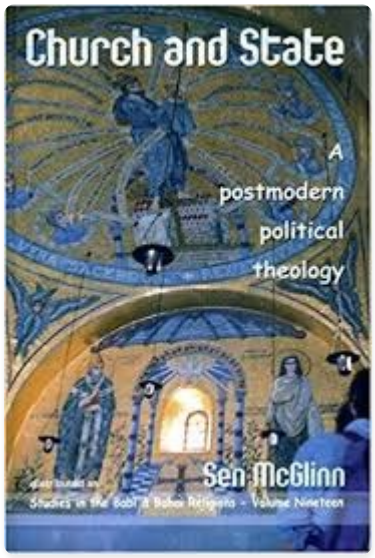


Comments

February 8. On this date in 2001, the UHJ wrote all NSAs regarding the "Applicability of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" noting that some "are not at present universally binding upon the friends," including the punishment of an arsonist by immolation to death and multiple other fines

Original file: 0159.html (position #120)

February 8. On this date in 2001, the UHJ wrote all NSAs regarding the "Applicability of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" noting that some "are not at present universally binding upon the friends," including the punishment of an arsonist by immolation to death and multiple other fines.

> *The Universal House of Justice*

Department of the Secretariat

8 February 2001

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Applicability of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

On 9 May 1993, each National Spiritual Assembly was sent a copy of a letter written to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland on 9 June 1974, which listed those laws not at that time binding upon the Western world. The covering letter noted that the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh had been made universally binding at Riḍván 1992. On 28 December 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the Bahá'ís throughout the world informing them of the universal application of the remaining aspects of the laws of prayer and fasting.

Therefore, to bring the information up to date, we have been asked to send you the enclosed list of laws not yet universally applied, to replace the one sent to you in May 1993.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

LAWS OF THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

NOT YET UNIVERSALLY APPLIED

28 December 1999

Following the universal application of the laws on prayer, fasting and the recitation of the Greatest Name, the Universal House of Justice has provided the following list of laws noted in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which are not at present universally binding upon the friends. The numbers of the sections are given for ease of reference.

IV.C.1.i The laws governing betrothal.

IV.C.1.j The law concerning the payment of a dowry by the groom to the bride on marriage.

IV.C.1.l & m The laws concerning the traveling of a husband away from his wife.

IV.C.1.n & o The laws relating to the virginity of the wife.

IV.C.2.b That part of the divorce law relating to fines payable to the House of Justice.

IV.C.3 The law of inheritance. This is normally covered by civil laws of intestacy at the present time.

IV.D.1.a The law of pilgrimage.

IV.D.1.d The law of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is gradually being put into effect.

IV.D.1.f The Bahá'í Festivals are being celebrated by the western friends on their anniversaries in the Gregorian calendar until such time as the Universal House of Justice deems it desirable to pass supplementary legislation necessary for the full implementation of the Badí' calendar.

IV.D.1.j The age of maturity applies only to Bahá'í religious duties as yet. On other matters it is subject to the civil law of each country. The age of administrative maturity in the Bahá'í community has, for the time being, been fixed at 21.

IV.D.1.k For the burial of the dead the only requirements now binding in the West are to bury the body (not to cremate it), not to carry it more than a distance of one hour's journey from the place of death, and to say the Prayer for the Dead if the deceased is a believer over the age of 15.

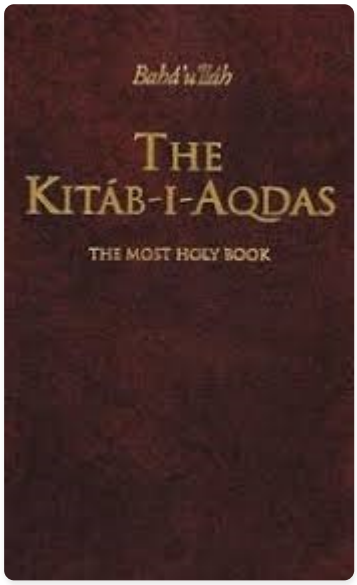
IV.D.1.p The law of tithes.

IV.D.1.r The law concerning the hunting of animals.

IV.D.1.t, u, v & w The law relating to the finding of lost property, the disposition of treasure trove, the disposal of objects held in trust and compensation for manslaughter are all designed for a future state of society. These matters are usually covered by the civil law of each country.

IV.D.1.y, xiv, xv, xvi & xvii Arson, adultery, murder and theft are all forbidden to Bahá'ís, but the punishments prescribed for them in the Kitab-i-Aqdas are designed for a future state of society. Such matters are usually covered by the civil laws of each country.

> *IV.D.1.y, xxv, xxx, xxxi & xxxii The laws prohibiting the use of the type of pools which used to be found in Persian baths, the plunging of one's hand in food, the shaving of one's head and growth of men's hair below the lobe of the ear.*
>
> *All the exhortations listed in section IV.D.3 are applicable universally at the present time insofar as it is possible for the friends to implement them; for example, the exhortation to teach one's children to chant the Holy Verses in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár can be literally carried out only on a limited scale at the present time, but the friends should, nevertheless, teach their children the Holy Writings as far as possible.*



Comments

February 8. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote the chapter titled "The Administrative Order" in his book "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," referring to "the deeds of its present and future Guardians."

Original file: 0158.html (position #119)

February 8. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi penned a work that would become the chapter titled "The Administrative Order" in his book *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, referring to "the deeds of its present and future Guardians" and noting "Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated..."

The chapter is notable for several aspects, including the emphasis that places on the institution of the Guardianship...

> ...
>
> *An attempt, I feel, should at the present juncture be made to explain the character and functions of* ***the twin pillars that support this mighty Administrative Structure—the institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice.*** *To describe in their entirety the diverse elements that function in conjunction with these institutions is beyond the scope and purpose of this*

general exposition of the fundamental verities of the Faith. To define with accuracy and minuteness the features, and to analyze exhaustively the nature of the relationships which, on the one hand, bind together these two fundamental organs of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and connect, on the other, each of them to the Author of the Faith and the Center of His Covenant is a task which future generations will no doubt adequately fulfill. My present intention is to elaborate certain salient features of this scheme which, however close we may stand to its colossal structure, are already so clearly defined that we find it inexcusable to either misconceive or ignore.

It should be stated, at the very outset, in clear and unambiguous language, that these twin institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their common, their fundamental object is to insure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings. Acting in conjunction with each other these two inseparable institutions administer its affairs, cöordinate its activities, promote its interests, execute its laws and defend its subsidiary institutions. Severally, each operates within a clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction; each is equipped with its own attendant institutions—instruments designed for the effective discharge of its particular responsibilities and duties. Each exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree from the position which each of these institutions occupies. Far from being incompatible or mutually destructive, they supplement each other's authority and functions, and are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims.

Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. *"In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and*

the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.

Severed from the no less essential institution of the Universal House of Justice this same System of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be paralyzed in its action and would be powerless to fill in those gaps which the Author of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has deliberately left in the body of His legislative and administrative ordinances.

"He is the Interpreter of the Word of God," 'Abdu'l-Bahá, referring to the functions of the Guardian of the Faith, asserts, *using in His Will the very term which He Himself had chosen when refuting the argument of the Covenant-breakers who had challenged His right to interpret the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh.* ***"After him," He adds, "will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants." "The mighty stronghold," He further explains, "shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God." "It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice, upon all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God, to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the Guardian of the Cause of God."***

"It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice," Bahá'u'lláh, on the other hand, declares in the Eighth Leaf of the Exalted Paradise, "to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He verily is the Provider, the Omniscient." "Unto the Most Holy Book" (the Kitáb-i-Aqdas), 'Abdu'l-Bahá states in His Will, "every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant."

Not only does 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirm in His Will Bahá'u'lláh's above-quoted statement, but invests this body with the additional right and power to abrogate, according to the exigencies of time, its own enactments, as well as those of a preceding House of Justice. "Inasmuch as the House of Justice," is His explicit statement in His Will, "hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same... This it can do because these laws form no part of the divine explicit text."

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From these statements it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word *and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.*

Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances. He interprets what has been specifically revealed, and cannot legislate except in his capacity as member of the Universal House of Justice. He is debarred from laying down independently the constitution that must govern the organized activities of his fellow-members, and from exercising his influence in a manner that would encroach upon the liberty of those whose sacred right is to elect the body of his collaborators.

It should be borne in mind that the institution of the Guardianship has been anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in an allusion He made in a Tablet addressed, long before His own ascension, to three of His friends in Persia. To their question as to whether there would be any person to whom all the Bahá'ís would be called upon to turn after His ascension He made the following reply: "As to the question ye

have asked me, know verily that this is a well-guarded secret. It is even as a gem concealed within its shell. That it will be revealed is predestined. The time will come when its light will appear, when its evidences will be made manifest, and its secrets unraveled."

Dearly-beloved friends! Exalted as is the position and vital as is the function of the institution of the Guardianship in the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and staggering as must be the weight of responsibility which it carries, its importance must, whatever be the language of the Will, be in no wise over-emphasized. The Guardian of the Faith must not under any circumstances, and whatever his merits or his achievements, be exalted to the rank that will make him a co-sharer with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the unique position which the Center of the Covenant occupies—much less to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God. So grave a departure from the established tenets of our Faith is nothing short of open blasphemy. As I have already stated, in the course of my references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station, however great the gulf that separates Him from the Author of a Divine Revelation it can never measure with the distance that stands between Him Who is the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and the Guardians who are its chosen ministers. There is a far, far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its Author.

No Guardian of the Faith, I feel it my solemn duty to place on record, can ever claim to be the perfect exemplar of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh or the stainless mirror that reflects His light. Though overshadowed by the unfailing, the unerring protection of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings, he remains essentially human and cannot, if he wishes to remain faithful to his trust, arrogate to himself, under any pretense whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon His Son. In the light of this truth to pray to the Guardian of the Faith, to address him as lord and master, to designate him as his holiness, to seek his benediction, to celebrate his birthday, or to commemorate any event associated with his life would be tantamount to a departure from those established truths that are enshrined within our beloved Faith. The fact that the Guardian has been specifically endowed with such power as he may need to reveal the purport and disclose the implications of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not necessarily confer upon him a station co-equal with those Whose words he is called upon to interpret. He can

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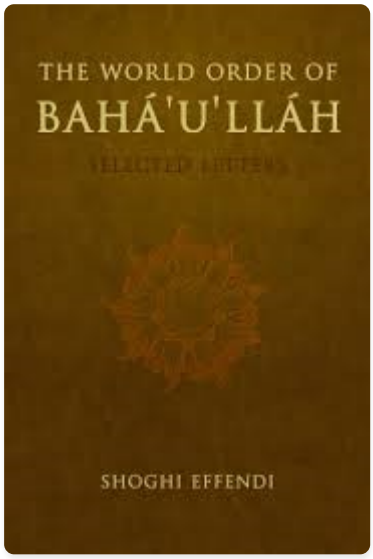

Comments

February 8. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote the chapter titled "The Administrative Order" in his book "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," noting "Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh would be mutilated..."

Original file: 0157.html (position #118)

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The chapter is notable for several aspects, including the emphasis that places on the institution of the Guardianship...

> ...

An attempt, I feel, should at the present juncture be made to explain the character and functions of ***the twin pillars that support this mighty Administrative Structure—the institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice.*** *To describe in their entirety the diverse elements that function in conjunction with these institutions is beyond the scope and purpose of this general exposition of the fundamental verities of the Faith. To define with accuracy and minuteness the features, and to analyze exhaustively the nature of the relationships which, on the one hand, bind together these two fundamental organs of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and connect, on the other, each of them to the Author of the Faith and the Center of His Covenant is a task which future generations will no doubt adequately fulfill. My present intention is to elaborate certain salient features of this scheme which, however close we may stand to its colossal structure, are already so clearly defined that we find it inexcusable to either misconceive or ignore.*

It should be stated, at the very outset, in clear and unambiguous language, that these twin institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their common, their fundamental object is to insure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings. Acting in conjunction with each other these two inseparable institutions administer its affairs, cöordinate its activities, promote its interests, execute its laws and defend its subsidiary institutions. Severally, each operates within a clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction; each is equipped with its own attendant institutions—instruments designed for the effective discharge of its particular responsibilities and duties. Each exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree from the position which each of these institutions occupies. Far from being incompatible or mutually destructive, they supplement each other's authority and functions, and are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims.

Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. *"In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son*

hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.

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Comments

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Original file: 0156.html (position #117)

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>
> *"The names of those cited in Bahá'u'lláh's prayer in the Dispensation are quite correct as you have them.*
>
> *"The Prophets 'regarded as One and the same person' include the Lesser Prophets as well, and not merely Those Who bring a 'Book'. The station is different, but they are Prophets and Their nature thus different from that of ours.*

> *"In the prayer mentioned above Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself with Imam Husayn. This does not make him a Prophet, but his position was very unique, and we know Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the 'return' of the Imam Husayn. He, in other words, identifies His Spirit with these Holy Souls gone before; that does not, of course, make Him in any way their reincarnation. Nor does it mean all of them were Prophets.*
>
> *"Your constant and devoted Bahá'í services are deeply valued by the Guardian, you may be sure, and he will pray in the Holy Shrines that your labours may be blessed and your power to confirm the souls increased."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 8, 1949)*

Comments

February 8. On this date in 1998, the UHJ wrote Susan Stiles Maneck a detailed response regarding her questions on the relationship between "materialistic methodologies" and "doctrinal heresy" in academic fields.

Original file: 0155.html (position #116)

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Academic Methodologies by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice and Susan Maneck 1997-09-21 1. Letter from Maneck to the Universal House of Justice Dear Universal House of Justice, Thank you for taking the time to respond at length to my letter in the message dated 20 July 1997 [below]. I have given this letter much thought, but remain confused by several portions of it and would greatly appreciate your clarification.

If I understand you correctly you are suggesting that Western academic methodology is typified by a "purely materialistic interpretation of reality" which "ignores the issues of God's continuous relationship with His creation." I am not entirely sure what is meant by

this. It is true that Western scientific and historical methodology admits its inability to determine the truth or falsity of spiritual claims and cannot presume their existence as they conduct their study. But I would think that such a method would become materialistic only if the scholar or scientist insists that because their scholarly apparatus cannot equip them to detect divine intervention or involvement, that such intervention does not therefore exist. The historical-critical methodis rather like the proverbial the spider's web. It is very good at capturing the "flies" of historical circumstance and context, but utterly useless in snaring the "phoenix" of revelation. If the tendency of some to deny the existence of the "phoenix" because their inability to "snare" it, is what is intended by "materialistic interpretations" I would certainly agree. Sound academic methodology does not call for such a conclusion and those who assume it are overstepping the proper bounds of their field. It has been my observation that materialism arises in scholarship, like all science, when it attempts to "take over" the sphere belonging properly to revelation, whereas religion becomes superstition when it attempts to assert its authority over scientific matters. Just as in the case of the equality of men and women we regard complementarity not sameness as the proper relationship, so such complementarity ought to exist between science and religion. When conflation occurs we end up with monstrosities like Scientific Creationism and Scientology.

However, your connection of "materialistic methodologies" with Covenantal issues make me wonder if there is not something else at stake. Any academic enterprise dealing with texts requires that the scholar get as close to the original source, those closest in time to the events they describe, as possible; and attempt to read these within the context in which they were written. This can create a certain amount of tensions with the common understanding of the Covenant which tends to give precedence to authority and later interpretations. I remember this issue came up for me in the course of a conversation I had with Mr. ... years ago when I received an award from the Association of Bahá'í Mr. ... was emphatic that I should never write anything which might contradict things in any way either the Dawnbreakers or God Passes By. I did not feel I could in good conscience give him the assurance he asked me for because it was my understanding that historical matters needed to rest upon evidence rather than authority. Is this insistence on relying upon original sources and giving precedence to evidence over authority what the House of Justice has in mind when it refers to "materialistic methodologies?"

I am well aware that the House of Justice has, on numerous occasions, condemned materialistic methodologies in connection with scholarship. Confusion on this issue has created a great deal of estrangement among many Bahá'í academics in relationship to the Bahá'í community at large. Often times the community tends to regard any discovery

made by academicians as "materialistic" if it conflicts with commonly received beliefs. Academicians, for their part, see many of the so-called "integrative" methods supported by some Bahá'ís as a reformulation of the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, which was guided by the principle that authority must override the evidence and guide its interpretation. They are resistant to it for they see this method as having impeding the progress of science. I think it would be of great help if the House of Justice would clarify this matter by providing some precise models of what kind of scholarship they deem "materialistic."

I note the statement towards the end of your letter to the effect that "Bahá'ís who are trained in various academic disciplines do not constitute a discrete body within the community" and that there is "no group of academics who can claim to speak on behalf of Bahá'í scholars in generally. I hope that the House understands that any references I have made to "academics" or to "administrators" within the Faith referred solely to function and not to any class or body. By academics here I meant solely those who have taken the Bahá'í Faith as their object of study and not simply those who apply Bahá'í principles to their scholarship in whatever field.

The House of Justice urged me "to reflect deeply on the reasons why those pursuing this agenda seek by every means possible to represent their actions as a disinterested search for knowledge and themselves as victims of authoritarianism." Please, allow me to make some observations based upon what I know from my long years of association with many of these individuals, friendships which have extended to the greater part of my adult life. First, it must be recognized that however distorted the picture which these people have presented, it does genuinely reflect what they, themselves believe to be true. At the same time, one must acknowledge that those perceptions have been so out of keeping with the evidence of what actually happened as to verge on paranoid delusion... The question which remains is how this distrustful attitude towards authority came to prevail over so many of the Bahá'í academics. Over a number of years scholars experienced growing frustration with their difficulty in gaining access to primary sources. Furthermore when one seemingly legitimate academic endeavor after another come to naught because of the disapproval of the Institutions, they began to suspect that the Institutions were endeavoring to withhold the truth from the body of believers. Thus, a significant portion of the Bahá'í academic community, myself included, came to harbor grave doubts regarding the integrity of the Institutions. Furthermore, many of them came to believe that the only way in which truth could be adequately safeguarded was to foster a kind of "civil society" within the Bahá'í community which would allow for unfettered discourse. Increasingly they began to make common cause with non-academics within the Bahá'í community who were calling for extensive administrative reforms. Then, when internet access allowed for the kind of free-

wheeling discourse they supported, long-festering doubts rapidly became malignant in character and what had hitherto been misgivings and suspicions came to be perceived as fact. The paranoid mind set which prevailed so clouded the judgement of some of the academics that they began to make wild accusations which betrayed all the methods of sound scholarship and the rules of evidence which they had fought so hard to defend.

The quote which you provided me on the subject of hikmat may well hold the key to the very different perceptions of the reality of this situation. Although references to "wisdom" appear numerous times in the Writings, Bahá'ís in the Western world are almost entirely ignorant of what it signifies. Furthermore, the concept itself is utterly foreign to the ethical standards which prevail in the West, and for Westerners it is difficult to perceive of the exercise of hikmat as anything other than sheer hypocrisy and deception. While Bahá'í academics trained in Persian and Arabic are more familiar with this term and its usage, they especially cannot find ways of reconciling it with the standards of truth promoted both in their profession and the Writings as well. My own article "Wisdom and Dissimulation", published recently in Bahá'í Studies Review, represented my own feeble attempt to come to terms with this issue. To my knowledge it is the only thing written in English on this topic and I do not think I was able to reach any satisfying resolution to the dilemmas posed by the demands for both truth and wisdom as found in the Writings. It is my perception that this inability to balance truth and wisdom represents a much more fundamental issue facing Bahá'í scholars than either issues of methodology or the question of individual rights versus responsibilities (although the latter is certainly related.) Guidance from the Institutions which would assist Western Bahá'ís and professional academics in particular regarding the manner in which they might exercise wisdom without compromising standards of honesty, integrity, and truthfulness which they hold so dear might help remediate this problem. It may be as well, that Bahá'í academics all too often have not recognized that to a great extent failure to exercise wisdom represents a failure of love.

I appreciate the assurance of your prayers at the Sacred Shrine.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, Susan Stiles Maneck 2. Second letter from Maneck to the Universal House of Justice To: Bahai World Centre Subject: Addendum to Sept. 21 letter Date: Mon, 17 Nov 1997 Dear Universal House of Justice,

I am writing this letter as an addendum to the letter I sent you dated September 21, 1997. There was a question I still had in regards to your message to me dated 20 July 1997 which I did not ask because at the time I could not decide how best to articulate it in a befitting manner. You will recall that I had suggested that many of the difficulties had arisen because many Bahá'í historians and Middle East specialists had exceeded the proper

bounds of their calling as scholars by interfering in administrative affairs with their constant criticisms of the institutions. You responded by stating that there were far greater problems involved, referring to "the behavior of a very small group of Bahá'ís who . . . aggressively sought to promote their misconceptions of the Teachings among their fellow believers." You further refer to attempts "to alter the essential nature of Bahá'u'lláh's message."

While I recognize that in some cases certain Bahá'ís have done precisely that, these statements were troubling to me inasmuch as they raised questions in regards to the limits of tolerance within the Bahá'í Faith. Specifically, as you are no doubt aware, Dr. ... has been vigorously insisting that the investigation which was launched by the International Teaching Center against himself and others was motivated by a desire to impose a rigid doctrinal conformity on Bahá'í scholars which would be inconsistent with our ability to function as academics. I had argued, to the contrary, that the investigation was largely launched in reaction to what was seen as an attack on the Institutions themselves. For this reason your letter of 20 July created much confusion for me because it seemed to vindicate Dr. ...'s perception of these events.

My question is, to what extent does the House see these problems as issues of doctrinal heresy which must therefore be suppressed and to what extent are the Institutions empowered to do this? I am aware, for instance, of the verse in the Will and Testament which reads: "To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular conviction. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Centre of the Cause and the House of Justice." I note, however that the term for opinion here is rai which is one of the principles (usul) of Islamic jurisprudence. Given the juridical language of this entire section of the Will and Testament I would assume that `Abdu'l-Bahá was speaking here largely of opinions in regard to matters of Bahá'í law and practice rather than doctrine.

If the Universal House of Justice does regard the imposition of orthodoxy on the Bahá'í community as within the purview of the authority of the Institutions I wonder if you could explain to me how this fits in with the tolerance which Abdu'l-Bahá calls for elsewhere within the Writings. I am thinking for instance of the passage in Kitab-I Bada'i al-Athar 1:294 where Abdu'l-Bahá insists that there must be no interference in beliefs or conscience. I also note that in another Tablet `Abdu'l-Bahá states that so long as courtesy is maintained that in the Faith no one can rule over a persons conscience. He goes on to say that such freedom does not extend to matters of divine law. (Ma'idih-yi Asmani 5:17-18.) I also have in mind Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Bourjerdi where even over the vital issue of the station of the Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh

refuses to allow the imposition of rigid dogma.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the issues I raise and for your continued prayers at the Sacred Shrines.

Obediently yours, Susan Maneck 3. Letter from the Universal House of Justice to Maneck 8 February 1998

Transmitted by email

Dr. Susan Stiles Maneck U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

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The Universal House of Justice received your emails of 21 September ar

Your email of 21 September covers a number of issues, the first of whi

The training of some scholars in fields such as religion and history s

Some of the protagonists in the discussions on the Internet have impli

The House of Justice recognizes that, at the other extreme, there are
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Dr. Susan Stiles Maneck U.S.A. 8 February 1998 Page 2 inconsistent applications of the Sacred Text, and provides fuel to those who would mistakenly characterize loyalty to the Covenant as "fundamentalism".

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It is not surprising that individual Bahá'ís hold and express differer

Beyond contention, moreover, is the condition in which a person is so

The Universal House of Justice does not see itself obliged to prescrik

O Son of Beauty! By My spirit and by My favor! By My mercy and by My k
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Although, in conveying His Revelation, the Manifestation uses the language and culture of the country into which He is born, He is not confined to using terminology with the same

connotations as those given to it by His predecessors or contemporaries; He delivers His message in a form which His audience, both immediate and in centuries to come, is capable of grasping. It is for Bahá'í scholars to elaborate, over a period of time, methodologies which will enable them to perform their work with this understanding. This is a challenging task, but not one which should be beyond the scope of Bahá'ís who are learned in the Teachings as well as competent in their scientific disciplines. This brings us to the specific points raised in your email of 17 November 1997. As you well understand, not only the right but also the responsibility

Dr. Susan Stiles Maneck U.S.A. 8 February 1998 Page 3 of each believer to explore truth for himself or herself are fundamental to the Bahá'í teachings. This principle is an integral feature of the coming of age of humankind, inseparable from the social transformation to which Bahá'u'lláh is calling the peoples of the world. It is as relevant to specifically scholarly activity as it is to the rest of spiritual and intellectual life. Every human being is ultimately responsible to God for the use which he or she makes of these possibilities; conscience is never to be coerced, whether by other individuals or institutions.

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Conscience, however, is not an unchangeable absolute. One dictionary d

The functioning of one's conscience, then, depends upon one's understa

A Bahá'í recognizes that one aspect of his spiritual and intellectual

In the discussion of wisdom in your email of 21 September 1997, you ob

A Bahá'í's duty to pursue an unfettered search after truth should lead
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Dr. Susan Stiles Maneck U.S.A. 8 February 1998 Page 4 that adherence to the Covenant, to which he is a party, is not blind imitation but conscious choice, freely made and freely followed.

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In many of His utterances, `Abdu'l-Bahá extols governments which upho

There are three types of freedom. The first is divine freedom, which
The second is the political freedom of Europeans, which leaves the in

The third freedom is that which is born of obedience to the laws and

Education of the individual Bahá'í in the Divine law is one of the du
The deepening and enrichment of the spiritual life of the individual
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Dr. Susan Stiles Maneck U.S.A. 8 February 1998 Page 5 underlying this Faith, his training in its administrative processes, his understanding of the fundamentals of the Covenants established by its Author and the authorized Interpreter of its teachings, should be made the supreme objectives of the national representatives responsible for the edification, the progress and consolidation of these communities. Such is the duty resting on the elected institutions of the Faith for the promotion of the spiritual, moral and ethical lives of the individual believers. Parallel with this, the Bahá'í Faith upholds the freedom of conscience which permits a person to follow his chosen religion: no one may be compelled to become a Bahá'í, or to remain a Bahá'í if he conscientiously wishes to leave the Faith. As to the thoughts of the Bahá'ís themselves -- that is those who have chosen to follow the religion of Bahá'u'lláh -- the institutions do not busy themselves with what individual believers think unless those thoughts become expressed in actions which are inimical to the basic principles and vital interests of the Faith. With regard to the accusation that to make such distinctions borders on restriction of the freedom of speech, one should accept that civil society has long recognized that utterance can metamorphose into behaviour, and has taken steps to protect itself and its citizens against such behaviour when it becomes socially destructive. Laws against sedition and hate-mongering are examples that come readily to mind.

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It will surely be clear to you from the above comments that the catego

It is important for all those Bahá'ís who are engaged in the academic

The problem which aroused the concern of the House of Justice, and has
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Dr. Susan Stiles Maneck U.S.A. 8 February 1998 Page 6 behaviour has been abundantly

confirmed by statements made and actions taken by certain of the involved individuals since they withdrew from the Bahá'í community. They sought to use the language, the occasions and the credibility of scholarly activity to lend a counterfeit authority to a private enterprise which was essentially ideological in nature and self-motivated in origin. Even if their original aims were idealistic in nature -- no matter how ill-informed and erroneous in concept -- they had evolved in practice into an assault on the Covenant which Bahá'u'lláh has created as a stronghold within which His Cause would evolve as He intends. The purpose of some of those responsible would seem to be that, by diminishing the station of Bahá'u'lláh -- a disservice done to previous Manifestations by people similarly inclined --, by casting doubt on the authority conferred on `Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, and by calling into question the integrity of Bahá'í administrative processes, they would be able to persuade a number of unwary followers that the Bahá'í Faith is in fact not a Divine Revelation but a kind of socio-political system being manipulated by ambitious individuals.

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Your own familiarity with these same persons' behaviour will have prov

For every thing, however, God has created a sign and symbol, and estab
We trust that these comments will help you to see the implications of
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With loving Bahá'í greetings, Department of the Secretariat

Comments

February 8. On this date in 2013, the UHJ announced the convocation of 95 youth conferences around the world. A few weeks later the UHJ called for 19 additional conferences, bringing the total to 114.

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> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *8 February 2013*
>
> *To the Bahá'ís of the World*
>
> *Dearly loved Friends,*
>
> *Within communities of every size and strength, we are glad to see the processes of the Five Year Plan kindling the spirit of service and stimulating purposeful action. Examples appear every day of how the act of reaching out to touch individual*

hearts, acquainting souls with the Word of God, and inviting them to contribute to the betterment of society can, in time, tend to the advancement of a people. This collective movement becomes discernible when the Plan's elements are combined into a well-coordinated cluster-wide effort, the dynamics of which are becoming increasingly familiar. Such a cluster becomes the setting for experienced believers as much as those newly introduced to the Faith, whatever their age or background, to work side by side, accompanying one another in their service, enabling everyone to participate in the unfoldment of the Plan.

From the panorama of the Bahá'í world engaged in earnest activity, one phenomenon strikes us especially: the decisive contribution made by youth on every continent. In this phenomenon we see the vindication of the hopes the beloved Guardian invested in them "for the future progress and expansion of the Cause" and of the confidence with which he laid upon their shoulders "all the responsibility for the upkeep of the spirit of selfless service among their fellow-believers". We are struck, too, by the number of youth who, after only a brief association with the Bahá'í community, commit themselves to meaningful acts of service and quickly discover their affinity with the Faith's community-building endeavour. Indeed, in contemplating both the Bahá'í youth and their like-minded peers, we cannot but rejoice at their eagerness to take on a measure of responsibility to aid the spiritual and social development of those around them, especially ones younger than themselves. In an age consumed by self-interest, in which even spiritual affiliation is weighed in the scales of reward and personal satisfaction, it is heartening to encounter individuals from their mid-teens to their twenties—those upon whom the sights of an aggressive materialism are decidedly trained—who are galvanized by the vision of Bahá'u'lláh and are ready to put the needs of others before their own. That such high-minded youth, by dint of their own exertions as well as the momentum they lend to the whole community, should be contributing so effectively to efforts everywhere under way bodes well for the anticipated acceleration of these efforts.

What has been accomplished in the past two years will, surely, be far surpassed, not just in the concluding years of this present Plan but in the remaining years of the first century of the Formative Age. To spur on this mighty enterprise and to summon today's youth to fully assume the responsibilities they must discharge in this fast-contracting interval, we announce the convocation of 95 youth conferences, between July and October, planned for locations that span the globe: Accra, Addis Ababa, Aguascalientes, Almaty, Antananarivo, Apia, Atlanta,

Auckland, Baku, Bangalore, Bangui, Bardiya, Battambang, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Boston, Brasília, Bridgetown, Bukavu, Cali, Canoas, Cartagena de Indias, Chennai, Chibombo, Chicago, Chişinău, Cochabamba, Daidanaw, Dakar, Dallas, Danané, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka, Dnipropetrovsk, Durham (United States), Frankfurt, Guwahati, Helsinki, Istanbul (2), Jakarta, Johannesburg, Kadugannawa, Kampala, Kananga, Karachi, Khujand, Kinshasa, Kolkata, Kuching, Lae, Lima, London, Lubumbashi, Lucknow, Macau, Madrid, Manila, Matunda Soy, Moscow, Mwinilunga, Mzuzu, Nadi, Nairobi, New Delhi, Oakland, Otavalo, Ouagadougou, Panchgani, Paris, Patna, Perth, Phoenix, Port-au-Prince, Port Dickson, Port Moresby, Port-Vila, San Diego, San José (Costa Rica), San Jose City (Philippines), San Salvador, Santiago, Sapele, Sarh, Seberang Perai, South Tarawa, Sydney, Tbilisi, Thyolo, Tirana, Toronto, Ulaanbaatar, Vancouver, Verona, Yaoundé. We extend an invitation to these gatherings to every youth who recognizes in the methods and instruments of the Plan potent means for movement towards a better society. And from Bahá'ís of all ages, we invite wholehearted support for the participants upon whose efforts so much depends.

Beloved friends: To every generation of young believers comes an opportunity to make a contribution to the fortunes of humanity, unique to their time of life. For the present generation, the moment has come to reflect, to commit, to steel themselves for a life of service from which blessing will flow in abundance. In our prayers at the Sacred Threshold, we entreat the Ancient Beauty that, from out a distracted and bewildered humanity, He may distil pure souls endowed with clear sight: youth whose integrity and uprightness are not undermined by dwelling on the faults of others and who are not immobilized by any shortcomings of their own; youth who will look to the Master and "bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends"; youth whose consciousness of the failings of society impels them to work for its transformation, not to distance themselves from it; youth who, whatever the cost, will refuse to pass by inequity in its many incarnations and will labour, instead, that "the light of justice may shed its radiance upon the whole world."

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

February 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Central States" which is the 11th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

Original file: 0153.html (position #114)

February 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Central States*, which is the 11th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of Abbúd in Acre, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the twelve Central States of the United States: Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> *He is God!*
>
> *O ye old believers and intimate friends:*

GOD says in the great Qur'án: "He specializes for His Mercy whomsoever He willeth." 1

These twelve Central States of the United States are like unto the heart of America, and the heart is connected with all the organs and parts of man. If the heart is strengthened, all the organs of the body are reinforced, and if the heart is weak all the physical elements are subjected to feebleness.

Now praise be to God that ***Chicago*** *and its environs from the beginning of the diffusion of the fragrances of God have been a strong heart. Therefore, through divine bounty and providence it has become confirmed in certain great matters.*

First: ***The call of the Kingdom was in the very beginning raised from Chicago. This is indeed a great privilege, for in future centuries and cycles, it will be as an axis around which the honor of Chicago will revolve.***

Second: A number of souls with the utmost firmness and steadfastness arose in that blessed spot in the promotion of the Word of God and even to the present moment, having purified and sanctified the heart from every thought, they are occupied with the promulgation of the teachings of God. Hence the call of praise is raised uninterruptedly from the Supreme Concourse.

Third: During the American journey 'Abdu'l-Bahá several times passed through Chicago and associated with the friends of God. For some time he sojourned in that city. Day and night he was occupied with the mention of the True One and summoned the people to the Kingdom of God.

Fourth: ***Up to the present time, every movement initiated in Chicago, its effect was spread to all parts and to all directions, just as everything that appears in and manifests from the heart influences all the organs and limbs of the body.***

Fifth: The first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in America was instituted in Chicago, and this honor and distinction is infinite in value. Out of this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, without doubt, thousands of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs will be born.

Likewise (were instituted in Chicago) the general Annual Conventions, the foundation of the Star of the West, the Publishing Society for the publication of

books and Tablets and their circulation in all parts of America, and the preparations now under way for the celebration of the Golden Centenary Anniversary of the Kingdom of God. I hope that this Jubilee and this Exhibition may be celebrated in the utmost perfection so that the call to the world of unity, "There is no God but One God, and all the Messengers, from the beginning to the Seal of the Prophets (Muḥammad) were sent on the part of the True One!" may be raised; the flag of the oneness of the world of humanity be unfurled, the melody of universal peace may reach the ears of the East and the West, all the paths may be cleared and straightened, all the hearts may be attracted to the Kingdom of God, the tabernacle of unity be pitched on the apex of America, the song of the love of God may exhilarate and rejoice all the nations and peoples, the surface of the earth may become the eternal paradise, the dark clouds may be dispelled and the Sun of Truth may shine forth with the utmost intensity.

O ye friends of God! Exert ye with heart and soul, so that association, love, unity and agreement be obtained between the hearts, all the aims may be merged into one aim, all the songs become one song and the power of the Holy Spirit may become so overwhelmingly victorious as to overcome all the forces of the world of nature. Exert yourselves; your mission is unspeakably glorious. Should success crown your enterprise, ***America will assuredly evolve into a center from which waves of spiritual power will emanate, and the throne of the Kingdom of God will, in the plentitude of its majesty and glory, be firmly established.***

This phenomenal world will not remain in an unchanging condition even for a short while. Second after second it undergoes change and transformation. Every foundation will finally become collapsed; every glory and splendor will at last vanish and disappear, but the Kingdom of God is eternal and the heavenly sovereignty and majesty will stand firm, everlasting. Hence in the estimation of a wise man the mat in the Kingdom of God is preferable to the throne of the government of the world.

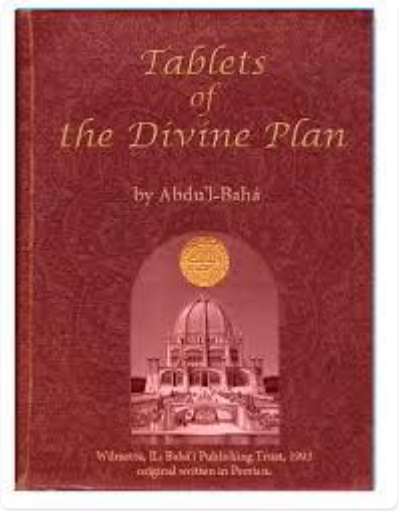
Continually my ear and eye are turned toward the Central States; perchance a melody from some blessed souls may reach my ears—souls who are the dawning-places of the love of God, the stars of the horizon of sanctification and holiness—souls who will illumine this dark universe and quicken to life this dead world. ***The joy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá depends upon this!*** *I hope that you may become confirmed therein.*

*Consequently, those souls who are in a condition of the utmost severance, purified from the defects of the world of nature, sanctified from attachment to this earth, vivified with the breaths of eternal life—**with luminous hearts, with heavenly spirit, with attraction of consciousness, with celestial magnanimity, with eloquent tongues and with clear explanations—such souls must hasten and travel through all parts of the Central States. In every city and village they must occupy themselves with the diffusion of the divine exhortations and advices, guide the souls** and promote the oneness of the world of humanity. They must play the melody of international conciliation with such power that every deaf one may attain hearing, every extinct person may be set aglow, every dead one may obtain new life and every indifferent soul may find ecstasy. It is certain that such will be the consummation.*

Let the spreaders of the fragrances of God recite this prayer every morning:

> *O LORD, my God! Praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee for Thou hast guided me to the highway of the kingdom, suffered me to walk in this straight and far-stretching path, illumined my eye by beholding the splendors of Thy light, inclined my ear to the melodies of the birds of holiness from the kingdom of mysteries and attracted my heart with Thy love among the righteous.*
>
> *O Lord! Confirm me with the Holy Spirit, so that I may call in Thy Name amongst the nations, and give the glad tidings of the manifestation of Thy kingdom amongst mankind.*
>
> *O Lord! I am weak, strengthen me with Thy power and potency. My tongue falters, suffer me to utter Thy commemoration and praise. I am lowly, honor me through admitting me into Thy kingdom. I am remote, cause me to approach the threshold of Thy mercifulness. O Lord! Make me a brilliant lamp, a shining star and a blessed tree, adorned with fruit, its branches overshadowing all these regions. Verily, Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful and Unconstrained.*

1. *Qur'án 2:105, 3:74.*



Comments

February 8. On this date in 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote "To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World" regarding a special Two Year Plan for Eastern Europe and Asia.

Original file: 0152.html (position #113)

February 8. On this date in 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote "To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World" regarding a special Two Year Plan for Eastern Europe and Asia.

> *The Universal House of Justice 8 February 1990*
>
> *To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World*
>
> *FAR-REACHING EVENTS BEING ENACTED WORLD STAGE, PARTICULARLY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION, ON THRESHOLD FINAL FATE-LADEN DECADE CENTURY OF LIGHT, PROVIDE FURTHER DRAMATIC EVIDENCE RESISTLESS OPERATION OF GOD'S MAJOR PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN SOCIETY. RAPID UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS NECESSITATE CORRESPONDING PARALLEL ACCELERATION IN LIFE-GIVING ENTERPRISES BEING PURSUED BY*

INHERITORS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S RESPLENDENT REVELATION.

REJOICE THEREFORE ANNOUNCE LAUNCHING AT RIḌVÁN OF SUBSIDIARY TWO YEAR TEACHING PLAN FOR VAST REMAINING REACHES EASTERN EUROPE AND ASIA. MOMENTOUS STEP INVOLVES FURTHER SYSTEMATIC UNFOLDMENT PROVISIONS TABLETS MASTER-PLAN OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ALREADY IN ADVANCED STAGE OF OPERATION OTHER AREAS PLANET. REGIONAL ENTERPRISE, CONCEIVED IN CONSULTATION INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER, DESIGNED SIGNIFICANTLY REINFORCE CURRENT SIX YEAR GLOBAL PLAN. OBJECTIVES INCLUDE ATTRACTION NUMEROUS NEW SUPPORTERS FAITH, GREAT INCREASE TRANSLATION, PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE IN REQUISITE LANGUAGES ENTIRE AREA, AND EXTENSION BENEFICENT INFLUENCE DIVINELY APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER THROUGH ERECTION FRAMEWORK LOCAL NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS IN AS MANY EASTERN COUNTRIES AS POSSIBLE UP TO AND INCLUDING RIḌVÁN 1992.

CALLING UPON THOSE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EUROPE, ASIA AND AMERICA WHICH BEAR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUAL NATIONS INVOLVED, TO CONSULT WITH COUNSELORS AND FORMULATE DETAILS SPECIFIC GOALS INCORPORATING AND SUPPLEMENTING THOSE ALREADY ADOPTED AND IN PROCESS ACCOMPLISHMENT UNDER SIX YEAR PLAN. MOVED PAY TRIBUTE PRESENT HOUR REMARKABLE UNSUNG ACHIEVEMENTS THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS PRESENTLY LABORING ADVANCEMENT CAUSE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION, ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HAVE BLAZED TRAILS FOR COMING LARGE-SCALE INITIATIVE. CALL UPON BAHÁ'Í WORLD ARISE SUPPORT DIFFUSION WORLD-REDEEMING MESSAGE FAITH GOAL AREAS THROUGH SETTLEMENT PIONEERS AND THROUGH DESPATCH STEADY FLOW TRAVELING TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE LANGUAGES COUNTRIES AND REPUBLICS EASTERN BLOC....

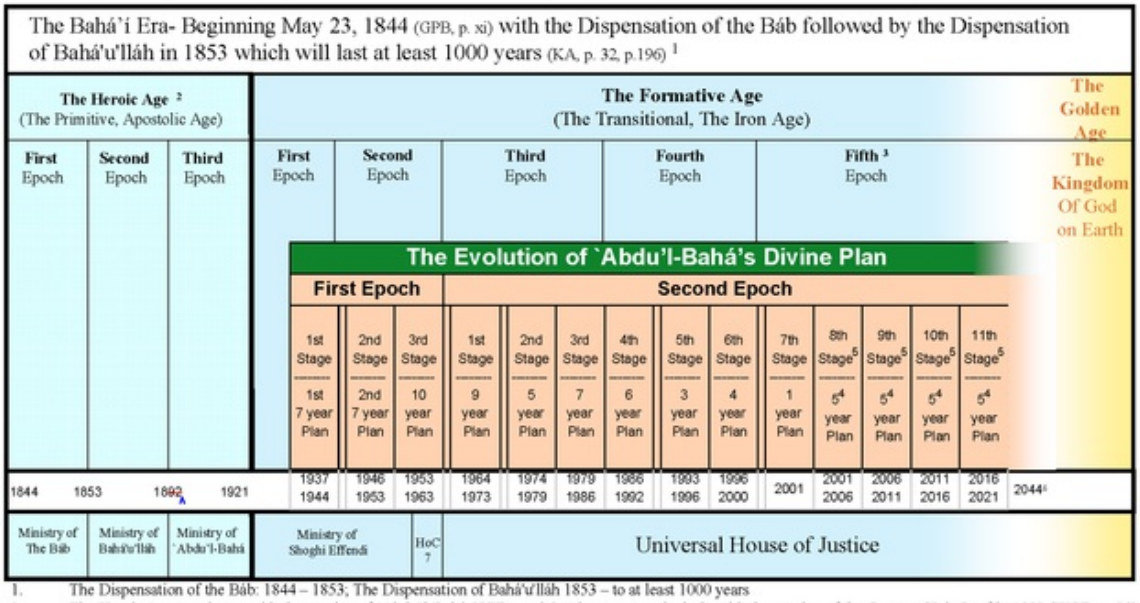
BROAD VISTAS NOW OPEN TO FAITH GOD PROVIDE UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES WIN FRESH VICTORIES AS WORTHY OFFERING SACRED THRESHOLD BLESSED BEAUTY OCCASION COMMEMORATION FIRST CENTENARY HIS ASCENSION COMING HOLY YEAR. IMPLORING ABUNDANT OUTPOURING DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS PARTICIPANTS ALL FACETS HISTORIC SIX YEAR CAMPAIGN.

> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

Passing of Glenford Mitchell

Original file: 0151.html (position #112)

February 7, 2026

https://news.bahai.org/story/1854/bwc-glenford-mitchell

Comments

A35821363: Thank you,

February 9, 1937. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding the passage on p. 163 of the 'Gleanings': The creatures which Bahá'u'lláh states to be found on every planet cannot be considered to be necessarily similar or different from human beings on this earth."

Original file: 0150.html (position #111)

February 9, 1937. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer "Regarding the passage on p. 163 of the 'Gleanings': The creatures which Bahá'u'lláh states to be found on every planet cannot be considered to be necessarily similar or different from human beings on this earth. Bahá'u'lláh does not specifically state whether such creatures are like or unlike us. He simply refers to the fact that there are creatures on every planet. It remains for science to discover one day the exact nature of these creatures."

The passage from "Gleanings" is as follows...

> *Thou hast, moreover, asked Me concerning the nature of the celestial spheres. To comprehend their nature, it would be necessary to inquire into the meaning of the allusions that have been made in the Books of old to the celestial spheres and the heavens, and to discover the character of their relationship to this physical world, and the influence which they exert upon it. Every heart is filled with wonder at so bewildering a theme, and every mind is perplexed by its mystery. God, alone, can fathom its import. The learned men, that have fixed at several thousand years the life of this earth, have failed, throughout the long period of their observation, to consider either the number or the age of the other planets. Consider, moreover, the manifold divergencies that have resulted from the theories propounded by these men.* ***Know thou that every fixed star hath its own planets, and every planet its own creatures, whose number no man can compute.***

Comments

February 9. On this date in 1984, Ethel Revell died. She was a member of the International Bahá'í Council serving as both an elected and appointed member. Ethel was the daughter of Mary J. Revell, known as Mother Revell for her role in founding the Bahá'í community of Philadelphia.

February 9. On this date in 1984, Ethel Revell died. She was a member of the International Bahá'í Council serving as both an elected and appointed member, and served for a time as the Western Assistant Secretary. Ethel was the daughter of Mary J. Revell, known as Mother Revell for her role in founding the Bahá'í community of Philadelphia.

Comments

February 9. On this date in 1953, Kannabran Rajagopal was born. He would pioneer to Southeast Asia where he served as an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection and as a member of the NSA of Laos.

February 9. On this date in 1953, Kannabran Rajagopal was born. He would pioneer to Southeast Asia where he served as an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection and as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Laos.

Comments

February 10. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "The pilgrim's note reports the Master as saying: 'Women and men must not embrace each other when not married, or not about to be married. They must not kiss each other'...the true spirit of the teachings on the subject of sex."

Original file: 0147.html (position #108)

Pictured above is ʻAbdu'l-Bahá kissing Sarah Farmer at Green Acre

February 10. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "The pilgrim's note reports the Master as saying: 'Women and men must not embrace each other when not married, or not about to be married. They must not kiss each other'...the true spirit of the teachings on the subject of sex."

1438. Pilgrim's Notes Reporting the Master's Words on Embracing and Kissing

"The pilgrim's note reports the Master as saying: 'Women and men must not embrace each other when not married, or not about to be married. They must not kiss each other... If they wish to greet each other, or comfort each other, they may take each other by the hand.' In a letter to an individual written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi it is said: 'The Master's words to ..., which you quoted, can certainly be taken as the true spirit of the teachings on the subject of sex. We must strive to achieve this exalted standard.' (October 19, 1947)"

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, February 10, 1974)

Also here...

February 10, 1974

Universal House of Justice

National Spiritual Assembly of the United States

"We have your letter...asking about a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Baha on the subject of embracing. We have seen no such Tablet, but we have seen reference to a pilgrim's note and the comment of the beloved Guardian on it.

"The pilgrim's note reports the Master as saying: 'Women and men must not embrace each other when not married, or not about to be married. They must not kiss each other....If they wish to greet each other, or comfort each other, they may take each other by the hand.'

"In a letter to an individual written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi it is said: 'The Master's words to..., which you quoted, can certainly be taken as the true spirit of the teachings on the subject of sex. We must strive to achieve this exalted standard.'"

(Baha'i National Review, June, 1979, p. 5; partially cited in Lights of Guidance, pp. 440-441)

Comments

February 10. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote Iranian believers "...the Pen of the Centre of the Covenant has repeatedly prophesied the intolerable calamities which must beset this wayward humanity ere it heeds the life-giving Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."

Original file: 0146.html (position #107)

February 10. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote Iranian believers "...the Pen of the Centre of the Covenant has repeatedly prophesied the intolerable calamities which must beset this wayward humanity ere it heeds the life-giving Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."

> *424. The People of Baha Are Assured of Divine Guidance*
>
> *"...the Pen of the Centre of the Covenant has repeatedly prophesied the intolerable calamities which must beset this wayward humanity ere it heeds the life-giving Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.*

'Chaos and confusion are daily increasing in the world. They will attain such intensity as to render the frame of mankind unable to bear them. Then will men be awakened and become aware that religion is the impregnable stronghold and the manifest light of the world, and its laws, exhortations and teachings the source of life on earth.'

"Every discerning eye clearly sees that the early stages of this chaos have daily manifestations affecting the structure of human society; its destructive forces are uprooting time-honoured institutions which were a haven and refuge for the inhabitants of the earth in bygone days and centuries, and around which revolved all human affairs. The same destructive forces are also deranging the political, economic, scientific, literary, and moral equilibrium of the world and are destroying the fairest fruits of the present civilization. Political machinations of those in authority have placed the seal of obsolescence upon the root-principles of the world's order. Greed and passion, deceit, hypocrisy, tyranny, and pride are dominating features afflicting human relations. Discoveries and inventions, which are the fruit of scientific and technological advancements, have become the means and tools of mass extermination and destruction and are in the hands of the ungodly. Even music, art, and literature, which are to represent and inspire the noblest sentiments and highest aspirations and should be a source of comfort and tranquility for troubled souls, have strayed from the straight path and are now the mirrors of the soiled hearts of this confused, unprincipled and disordered age. Perversions such as these shall result in the ordeals which have been prophesied by the Blessed Beauty in the following words: 'Every day a new calamity will seize the earth and a fresh tormenting trial will appear'. 'The day is approaching when its (civilization's) flame will devour the cities.'

"In such an afflicted time, when mankind is bewildered and the wisest of men are perplexed as to the remedy, the people of Baha, who have confidence in His unfailing grace and divine guidance, are assured that each of these tormenting trials has a cause, a purpose, and a definite result, and all are essential instruments for the establishment of the immutable Will of God on earth. In other words, on the one hand humanity is struck by the scourge of His chastisement which will inevitably bring together the scattered and vanquished tribes of the earth; and on the other, the weak few whom He has nurtured under the protection of His loving guidance are, in this formative age and period of transition, continuing to build amidst these tumultuous waves an impregnable stronghold which will be the sole remaining refuge for those lost multitudes. Therefore, the dear friends of God who

have such a broad and clear vision before them are not perturbed by such events, nor are they panic-stricken by such thundering sounds, nor will they face such convulsions with fear and trepidation, nor will they be deterred, even for a moment, from fulfilling their sacred responsibilities.

"One of their sacred responsibilities is to exemplify in their lives those attributes which are acceptable at His Sacred Threshold."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the Iranian believers resident in various countries throughout the world, February 10, 1980

Comments

February 10. On this date in 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims to Haifa from Australia and New Zealand left Melbourne, arriving in Haifa on March 13. The party consisted of Effie Baker, Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh).

Original file: 0145.html (position #106)

February 10. On this date in 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims to Haifa from Australia and New Zealand left Melbourne, arriving in Haifa on March 13. The party consisted of Effie Baker, Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh). Effie Baker was an Australian photographer who became a follower of the Bahá'í Faith in 1922. Some of the pictures she took of the Bahá'í monuments in Iraq and Iran were included in Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabíl-i-A`zam's The Dawn-Breakers.

On September 3, 1892, a few months after Bahá'u'lláh's death, Nabíl-i-A’ẓam, the author of *The Dawn-breakers*, died. Parts of his body and clothing were found washed up on the coast in Acre. While Bahá'í sources attribute his death to suicide, other sources claim he

was murdered.

Sources that allege Nabíl-i-A'ẓam was murdered base their claim on the allegation that he became a victim due to his support of Mírzá Muhammad `Alí in his conflict with 'Abdu'l-Bahá...

> *According to the memoirs of Baha's son Mirza Badiullah surnamed the Most Luminous Branch (غصن/نور) by Baha: One year after Baha's death, Nabil visited Badiullah in Haifa. He was distressed. Nabil said to Badiullah: "I can no longer stay at Acre. The situation there has deteriorated. By dint of violence, abusive language and cursing, one has to act against his own faith, has to regard and hold the Most Mighty Branch [Ghusn-i Azam, i.e. Abdul Baha Abbas] superior in station to the Blessed Beauty [Janab-i Mubarak, i.e. Baha] has to write corrupted [versions of] all the holly writings and epistles, and has to vilify and excommunicate [Baha's] sons, [Baha's] words and [Baha's] family [i.e. all the members of Baha's household in opposition to Abdul Baha Abbas], failing which one is branded as covenant-breaker [Naqiz] or Vacillator [Mutezalzil, i.e. opposed to Abdul Baha Abbas and partisan of Muhammad Ali] and becomes the object of untold calumnies and falsehoods."* ***Nabil requested Badiullah to find him a suitable room at the foot of Mount Carmel. He went back to Acre to fetch his things. Nothing was heard of him for sometime. Later "limbs of his body and his clothing" were discovered near the see shores at Acre. These were collated together and buried. Abdul Baha Abbas "shed crocodile tears" during the burial service of Nabil, "although he was exceedingly annoyed with him."***

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled "NABIL-E AʿẒAM ZARANDI, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD"...

Comments

February 11. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í."

Original file: 0144.html (position #105)

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> *I am charged by the Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 30th as well as for the enclosed pamphlet containing the address delivered by Herr Hitler on Oct. 14th, 1933, on the subject of Germany's attitude towards peace, all of which he read with deepest care and sustained interest. He wishes me to convey to you and to all the members of your German National Assembly and through them to all the followers of the Faith in Germany his views on the present conditions in that land, and particularly in their relation to the nature and scope of the Bahá'í activities of our German believers.*
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> *At the outset it should be made indubitably clear that the Bahá'í Cause being essentially a religious movement of a spiritual character stands above every political party or group, and thus cannot and should not act in contravention to the principles, laws, and doctrines of any government.* ***Obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í.*** *Both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá have urged us all to be submissive and loyal to the political authorities of our respective countries. It follows, therefore, that* ***our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and***

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For whereas the friends should obey the government under which they live, even at the risk of sacrificing all their administrative affairs and interests, they should under no circumstances suffer their inner religious beliefs and convictions to be violated and transgressed by any authority whatever. ***A distinction of a fundamental importance must, therefore, be made between spiritual and administrative matters. Whereas the former are sacred and inviolable, and hence cannot be subject to compromise, the latter are secondary and can consequently be given up and even sacrificed for the sake of obedience to the laws and regulations of the government. Obedience to the state is so vital a principle of the Cause that should the authorities in Germany decide to-day to prevent the Bahá'ís from holding any meeting or publishing any literature they should obey and be as submissive as our Russian believers have thus far been under the Soviet regime. But, as already pointed out, such an allegiance is confined merely to administrative matters which if checked can only retard the progress of the Faith for some time. In matters of belief, however, no compromise whatever should be allowed, even though the outcome of it be death or expulsion***

There is one more point to be emphasized in this connection. The principle of obedience to government does not place any Bahá'í under the obligation of identifying the teachings of his Faith with the political program enforced by the government. For such an identification, besides being erroneous and contrary to both the spirit as well as the form of the Bahá'í message, would necessarily create a conflict within the conscience of every loyal believer.

For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe but over a large part of mankind is, indeed, the very negation of the gospel of

peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. The actual trend in the political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.

From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.

The Guardian hopes that these brief explanations will be sufficient to guide our German National Assembly in their efforts to safeguard and promote the interests of the Faith, and that through them they will be given a new vision of the Cause and a fresh determination to carry forward its message to the world at large.

With greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in Germany,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in loving appreciation of your strenuous, your intelligent and devoted efforts for the spread and consolidation of our beloved Faith. May the Almighty bless your endeavours, deepen your understanding of the essentials and requirements of our beloved Cause, and enable you in these difficult and challenging days to promote its interests and consolidate its institutions,

Your true brother,

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Original file: 0143.html (position #104)

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Original file: 0142.html (position #103)

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Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

February 11. On this date in 2004, a letter to The Guardian newspaper signed by several medical specialists was titled "Medical evidence does not support suicide by Kelly." David Kelly, a Bahá'í, was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Original file: 0141.html (position #102)

February 11. On this date in 2004, a letter to The Guardian newspaper signed by several medical specialists was titled Medical evidence does not support suicide by Kelly. An authority on biological warfare employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, David Kelly, a Bahá'í, was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Medical evidence does not support suicide by Kelly

Since three of us wrote our letter to the Guardian on January 27, questioning whether Dr Kelly)'s death was suicide, we have received professional support for our view from vascular surgeon Martin Birnstingl, pathologist Dr Peter Fletcher, and consultant in public health Dr Andrew Rouse. We all agree that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr Kelly's death was haemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report.

On February 10, Dr Rouse wrote to the BMJ explaining that he and his colleague, Yaser Adi, had spent 100 hours preparing a report, Hutton, Kelly and the Missing Epidemiology. They concluded that "the identified evidence does not support the view that wrist-slash deaths are common (or indeed possible)". While Professor Chris Milroy, in a letter to the BMJ, responded, "unlikely does not make it impossible", Dr Rouse replied: "Before most of us will be prepared to accept wristslashing ... as a satisfactory and credible explanation for a death, we will also require evidence that such aetiologies are likely; not merely 'possible'. "

Our criticism of the Hutton report is that its verdict of "suicide" is an inappropriate finding. To bleed to death from a transected artery goes against classical medical teaching, which is that a transected artery retracts, narrows, clots and stops bleeding within minutes. Even if a person continues to bleed, the body compensates for the loss of blood through vasoconstriction (closing down of non-essential arteries). This allows a partially exsanguinated individual to live for many hours, even days.

Professor Milroy expands on the finding of Dr Nicholas Hunt, the forensic pathologist at the Hutton inquiry - that haemorrhage was the main cause of death (possibly finding it inadequate) - and falls back on the toxicology: "The toxicology showed a significant overdose of co-proxamol. The standard text, Baselt, records deaths with concentrations at 1 mg/l, the concentration found in Kelly." But Dr Allan, the toxicogist in the case, considered this nowhere near toxic. Each of the two components was a third of what is normally considered a fatal level. Professor Milroy then talks of "ischaemic heart disease". But Dr Hunt is explicit that Dr Kelly did not suffer a heart attack. Thus, one must assume that no changes attributable to myocardial ischaemia were actually found at autopsy.

We believe the verdict given is in contradiction to medical teaching; is at variance

> *with documented cases of wrist-slash suicides; and does not align itself with the evidence presented at the inquiry. We call for the reopening of the inquest by the coroner, where a jury may be called and evidence taken on oath.*
>
> ***Andrew Rouse***
>
> *Public health consultant*
>
> ***Searle Sennett***
>
> *Specialist in anaesthesiology*
>
> ***David Halpin***
>
> *Specialist in trauma*
>
> ***Stephen Frost***
>
> *Specialist in radiology*
>
> ***Dr Peter Fletcher***
>
> *Specialist in pathology*
>
> ***Martin Birnstingl***
>
> *Specialist in vascular surgery*

On September 25, 1999, David Kelly converted to the Bahá'í Faith at the Bosch Bahá'í School in California. David Kelly was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

On July 17, 2003, David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide, two days after appearing before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee. An authority on biological warfare employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, David Kelly was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

On August 11, 2003, the Independent carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In

October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

From *The Times* article titled "Faith, peace and tolerance in Monterey", dated September 3, 2003.

> *September 3*
>
> *Faith, peace and tolerance in Monterey*
>
> *By Chris Ayres and James Bone*
>
> *Four years ago David Kelly made a personal odyssey to the Californian resort of Monterey. He was there, not to visit its military installations or its tourist boutiques but to convert to the Baha'i faith*
>
> *IT WOULD SEEM an unlikely place to find peace for the soul. Monterey, an affluent city on California's central coast, about an hour's flight north from Los Angeles, is known more for its proximity to military installations and its role as retirement city of choice for generals and one-time spies than for any sense of spirituality. But it was to this beautiful seaside resort, often shrouded in mist because of the hot air from the Californian deserts hitting the cold Pacific, that David Kelly came four years ago to make a declaration of faith to the Baha'i religion.*
>
> *On September 25, 1999, he would have turned his back on the postcard landscape of sand dunes and gleaming ocean that marks California's Pacific Coast Highway, and taken the incongruously named Bonny Doon Road up through the towns of Loch Lomond and Bracken Brae, until he came to the first signpost to the Bosch Baha'i School, one of only four such establishments in the United States and an inspiration for the British scientist and biological weapons expert. He was possibly accompanied by his friend and spiritual mentor Mai Pederson, the American woman thought to be responsible for introducing him to the Baha'i faith.*

Monterey, with its proximity to the Defence Language Institute and other military installations, was a natural destination for Dr Kelly; the Monterey Institute of International Studies, which has its own Centre for Nonproliferation Studies, the largest non-governmental organisation in the world devoted to curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, would have been an essential place for him to visit. The centre is thought to have one of the largest databases of information on Saddam Hussein's regime in the world. The city itself, an old fishing town turned into a tourist mecca, with chi-chi boutiques and restaurants that line the seafront — a kind of Covent Garden-on-sea — is similar to other California coastal towns such as Carmel and Santa Barbara that look out over the rolling surf of the Pacific. But it is thought that Dr Kelly visited Monterey not for the expertise offered by the city's scientists, but for the consolation of the soul that he would find in the Baha'i school high above the city, overlooking the California coastline.

After reaching the series of wooden cabins that make up the school's campus — passing, first, the four garden gnomes, dressed in 19th-century peasant outfits, that wave cheerfully to those curious or devoted enough to go further — he made his simple declaration of faith. According to Joanne McClure, a youthful 66-year-old who pays $65 (£41) a night for room and board at the school, to an untrained eye this would have seemed an almost casual affair, the kind of non-ritual ritual beloved of the Baha'is, who pride themselves on having no formal initiation ceremony, sacrament or clergy. "First we would make sure initiates know who Baha'ullah is — the founder of the faith — and that they really knew what they were doing," says McClure. "Then they would sign a card saying that there are certain laws they need to obey." These include abstaining from drink, drugs and gambling; supporting the institution of marriage; believing that God created the universe; and encouraging the end of racial, class, and religious prejudices. After Dr Kelly had signed the card, it would have been sent to the Baha'i national headquarters in Wilmette, Illinois, where the new believer would be put on the mailing list for the American magazine The Baha'is. From then on, Dr Kelly would have been encouraged to attend feasts held every 19 days, which involve prayer-chants, administrative discussions with local spiritual assemblies, and general socialising.

Dr Kelly would have been attracted to the peacefulness and tolerance of the Baha'is, who believe that all religions are essentially valid. As McClure says: "I could never understand why God was going to send all these people to Hell just because they didn't believe in the same things." As a scientist, perhaps seeking

spiritual succour within an intellectual framework, he would also have been attracted to the faith's openness to modernity and its lack of fundamentalist dogma.

Throughout 1999 Dr Kelly travelled to New York for six or seven two-week trips to work with fellow experts at UN headquarters, and he visited at least twice more for the regular six-monthly meetings of the UN Special Commission's (UNSCOM's) college of commissioners. During this year, he often appeared at Baha'i meetings on the other side of the continent in Monterey, at the group's traditional 19th-day feasts. Pederson, who was studying at the Defence Language Institute, a heavily guarded military facility that taught American soldiers how to speak Japanese during the Second World War, was also at the feasts. The two had met and become friends when she served under the scientist on a UN mission to Iraq in 1998, the last inspection before the withdrawal of UN inspectors.

John VonBerg, whose wife was the secretary of the local Baha'is' spiritual assembly at the time, says: "He has been to my home several times. We had special events on holy days, representing various things. His principles were so close to those of the Baha'i faith."

The last time Dr Kelly visited, VonBerg remembers the Baha'i group going to gaze out over the bay.

Noreen Steinmetz, a friend of Dr Kelly and Pederson, recalls: "He would pass through here every once in a while and we would have the opportunity to sit down with him and go on hikes and chat. I met him through Mai Pederson." She adds that Dr Kelly always arrived at meetings by himself, and other Baha'is assumed that he was working at the nearby Monterey Institute, where several of his UN colleagues worked. But scientist friends at the centre say he never visited them there.

A glance around the Bosch Baha'i School's bookshop reveals some possible sources of tension for Dr Kelly. Several tomes focus on the divine importance of the UN, which was eventually ignored by the United States and Britain after it refused to support a military campaign to remove the Iraqi regime.

With that in mind, it is hard to see how Dr Kelly could ever have supported an Iraq war without UN approval.

Even more ominous, however, is a tract entitled Political Non-Involvement and

> *Obedience to Government, compiled by Peter J. Khan. The book spells out the Baha'is' belief that they should not become involved in any form of politics, because politics can create divisions that could destroy the Baha'i community.*
>
> *As part of this argument, Baha'is believe that they should support their government, whether just or unjust (there are, however, exceptions). On page 28, Khan poses a question that Dr Kelly himself could have asked: What should we do when controversies arise as a result of government policies?*
>
> *The answer, provided by the Guardian of the Baha'i faith, the late Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, is this: "In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that worldwide fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster."*
>
> *Khan's book makes it clear that any Baha'i who does not follow this advice is ultimately weakening the Baha'i religion. Given this official position from the Guardian, it is not hard to imagine Dr Kelly's horror when he was named as the alleged source of a story blaming Britain's decision to go to war on a press secretary who "sexed up" intelligence reports.*
>
> *But would the Guardian have condoned suicide? "Let's just say," says Mrs VonBerg, "that it would not follow the teachings of the Baha'i faith."*

On January 27, 2004, three medical experts wrote *The Guardian* newspaper a letter stating that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr. Kelly)'s death was hemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report.

> *Our doubts about Dr Kelly's suicide*
>
> *As specialist medical professionals, we do not consider the evidence given at the Hutton inquiry has demonstrated that Dr David Kelly committed suicide.*
>
> *Dr Nicholas Hunt, the forensic pathologist at the Hutton inquiry, concluded that Dr Kelly bled to death from a self-inflicted wound to his left wrist. We view this as highly improbable. Arteries in the wrist are of matchstick thickness and severing them does not lead to life-threatening blood loss. Dr Hunt stated that the only artery that had been cut - the ulnar artery - had been completely transected.*

Complete transection causes the artery to quickly retract and close down, and this promotes clotting of the blood.

The ambulance team reported that the quantity of blood at the scene was minimal and surprisingly small. It is extremely difficult to lose significant amounts of blood at a pressure below 50-60 systolic in a subject who is compensating by vasoconstricting. To have died from haemorrhage, Dr Kelly would have had to lose about five pints of blood - it is unlikely that he would have lost more than a pint.

Alexander Allan, the forensic toxicologist at the inquiry, considered the amount ingested of Co-Proxamol insufficient to have caused death. Allan could not show that Dr Kelly had ingested the 29 tablets said to be missing from the packets found. Only a fifth of one tablet was found in his stomach. Although levels of Co-Proxamol in the blood were higher than therapeutic levels, Allan conceded that the blood level of each of the drug's two components was less than a third of what would normally be found in a fatal overdose.

We dispute that Dr Kelly could have died from haemorrhage or from Co-Proxamol ingestion or from both. The coroner, Nicholas Gardiner, has spoken recently of resuming the inquest into his death. If it re-opens, as in our opinion it should, a clear need exists to scrutinise more closely Dr Hunt's conclusions as to the cause of death.

David Halpin

Specialist in trauma and orthopaedic surgery ***C Stephen Frost***

Specialist in diagnostic radiology ***Searle Sennett***

Specialist in anaesthesiology *rowenathursby@onetel.net.uk*

Follow-up letter on February 11, 2004...

Medical evidence does not support suicide by Kelly

Since three of us wrote our letter to the Guardian on January 27, questioning whether Dr Kelly)'s death was suicide, we have received professional support for

our view from vascular surgeon Martin Birnstingl, pathologist Dr Peter Fletcher, and consultant in public health Dr Andrew Rouse. We all agree that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr Kelly's death was haemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report.

On February 10, Dr Rouse wrote to the BMJ explaining that he and his colleague, Yaser Adi, had spent 100 hours preparing a report, Hutton, Kelly and the Missing Epidemiology. They concluded that "the identified evidence does not support the view that wrist-slash deaths are common (or indeed possible)". While Professor Chris Milroy, in a letter to the BMJ, responded, "unlikely does not make it impossible", Dr Rouse replied: "Before most of us will be prepared to accept wristslashing ... as a satisfactory and credible explanation for a death, we will also require evidence that such aetiologies are likely; not merely 'possible'. "

Our criticism of the Hutton report is that its verdict of "suicide" is an inappropriate finding. To bleed to death from a transected artery goes against classical medical teaching, which is that a transected artery retracts, narrows, clots and stops bleeding within minutes. Even if a person continues to bleed, the body compensates for the loss of blood through vasoconstriction (closing down of non-essential arteries). This allows a partially exsanguinated individual to live for many hours, even days.

Professor Milroy expands on the finding of Dr Nicholas Hunt, the forensic pathologist at the Hutton inquiry - that haemorrhage was the main cause of death (possibly finding it inadequate) - and falls back on the toxicology: "The toxicology showed a significant overdose of co-proxamol. The standard text, Baselt, records deaths with concentrations at 1 mg/l, the concentration found in Kelly." But Dr Allan, the toxicogist in the case, considered this nowhere near toxic. Each of the two components was a third of what is normally considered a fatal level. Professor Milroy then talks of "ischaemic heart disease". But Dr Hunt is explicit that Dr Kelly did not suffer a heart attack. Thus, one must assume that no changes attributable to myocardial ischaemia were actually found at autopsy.

We believe the verdict given is in contradiction to medical teaching; is at variance with documented cases of wrist-slash suicides; and does not align itself with the evidence presented at the inquiry. We call for the reopening of the inquest by the coroner, where a jury may be called and evidence taken on oath.

Andrew Rouse

Public health consultant

Searle Sennett

Specialist in anaesthesiology

David Halpin

Specialist in trauma

Stephen Frost

Specialist in radiology

Dr Peter Fletcher

Specialist in pathology

Martin Birnstingl

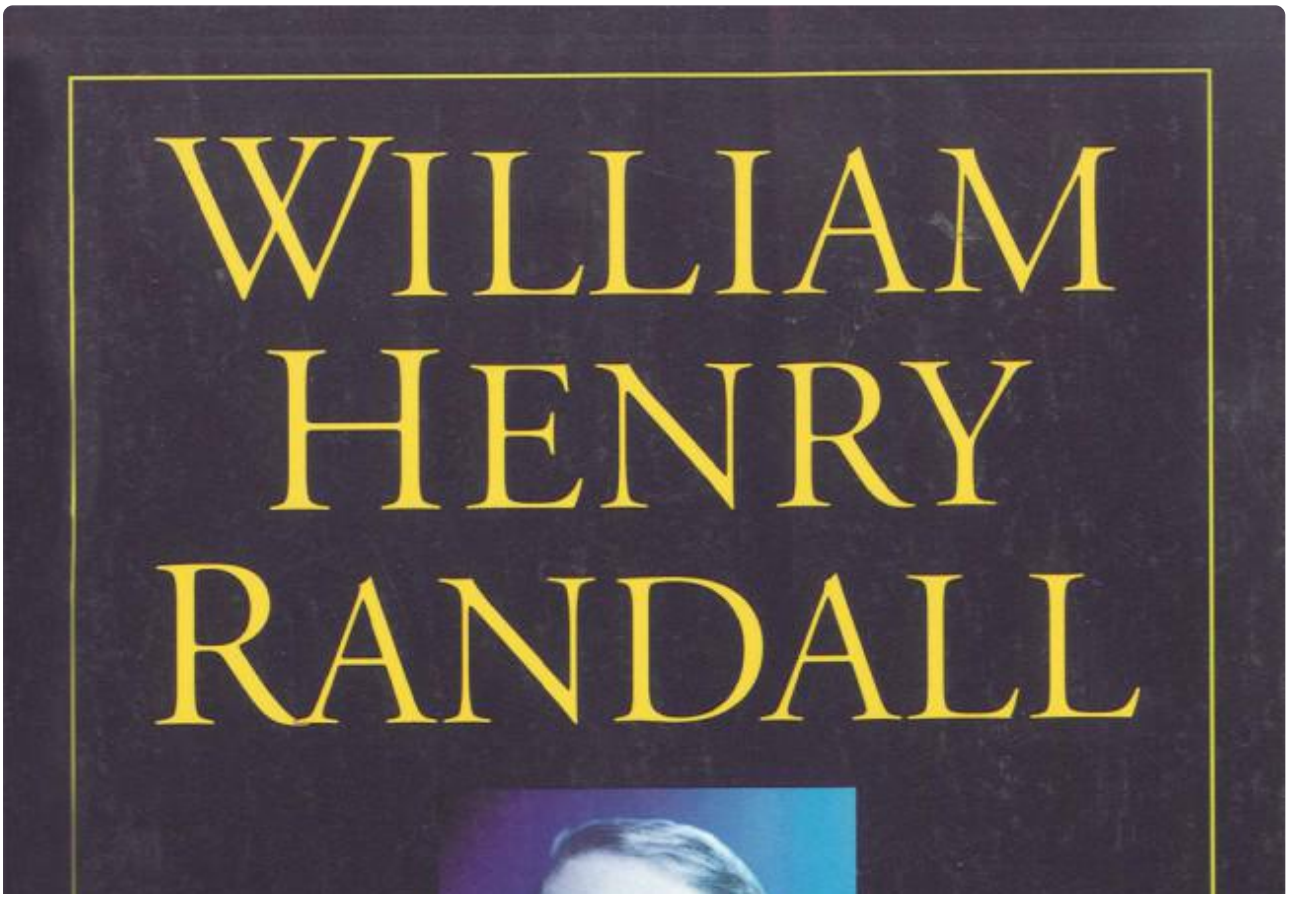
Specialist in vascular surgery

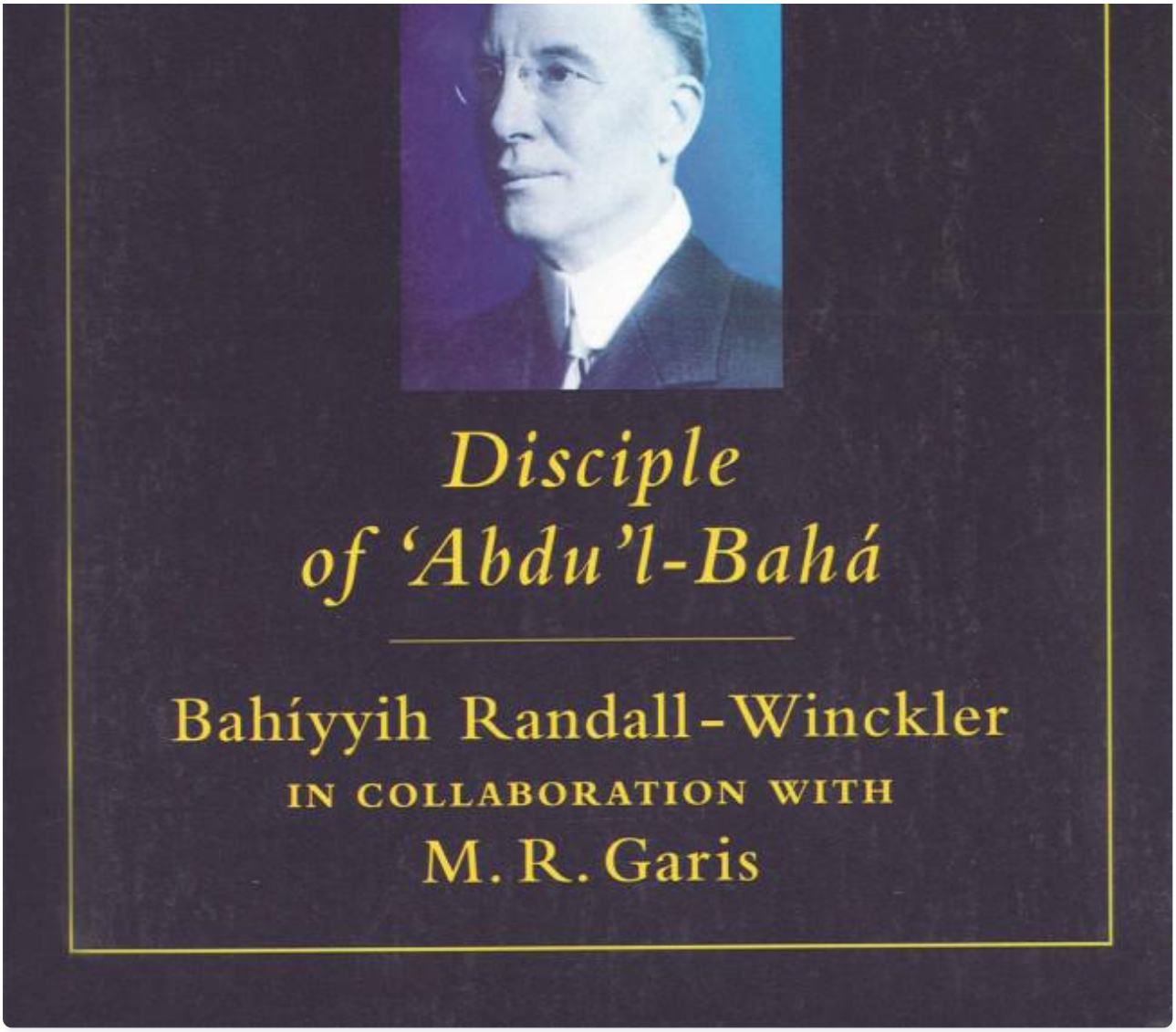
Comments

February 11. On this date in 1929, William Henry Randall, a former member of Baha'i Temple Unity and later named a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, died.

Original file: 0140.html (position #101)

February 11. On this date in 1929, William Henry Randall, a former member of Baha'i Temple Unity and later named a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, died.




Disciple
of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Bahíyyih Randall-Winckler
IN COLLABORATION WITH
M. R. Garis

Comments

February 11. On this date in 1960, the Custodians wrote all Hands of the Cause of God and NSAs "some highlights on the progress of the Faith, gleaned from news reaching Haifa from all over the Bahá'í world" noting "Great indeed is the power of Bahá'u'lláh!"

Original file: 0139.html (position #100)

February 11. On this date in 1960, the Custodians wrote all Hands of the Cause of God and NSAs "some highlights on the progress of the Faith, gleaned from news reaching Haifa from all over the Bahá'í world" noting "Great indeed is the power of Bahá'u'lláh!"

> ***To the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the World***
>
> *February 11, 1960*
>
> *Dear Fellow-Hands:*

It was agreed at the Conclave that the Hands residing in the Holy Land should from time to time circulate some of the news contained in the reports and letters that flow in to the World Centre. We enclose the first of these News Letters which we trust you will find helpful in your teaching and other activities.

We are asking the National Assemblies to share this with the friends through their own News Letters.

With warm Bahá'í love,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

To All National Spiritual Assemblies

February 11, 1960

Beloved Friends:

Enclosed is a communication from the World Centre, giving some highlights on the progress of the Faith, gleaned from news reaching Haifa from all over the Bahá'í world.

We feel that such a News Letter from the Holy Land, which we plan to issue from time to time, will be of interest to the friends and provide a source of inspiration and encouragement.

Please share this bulletin with the believers in your area through your News Letter.

With warm Bahá'í love,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

NEWS FROM THE WORLD CENTRE OF THE FAITH

February 11, 1960

Dearly beloved Friends:

The Hands of the Faith in the Holy Land have received many requests for news direct from the World Centre, and it has been our hope for some time to share with the believers selections from the glad-tidings which reach us here. The two years which have elapsed since the passing of our dearly beloved Guardian have imposed such heavy burdens that it has been impossible hitherto for us to undertake this informal news letter to the friends, which we hope to be able to send out from time to time in the future.

Through the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, the day-to-day work of the World Centre has continued very much as it did in the time of our beloved Guardian, but of course without the divine inspiration, the wondrous wisdom and love which it then received through the Sign of God on earth.

As the friends have no doubt noticed from the correspondence coming from the Hands in the Holy Land, we have been blessed with the assistance on different occasions of many of our fellow-Hands. That is why the signatures on the letters are not the same at different times. Some of us are occasionally absent for necessary reasons, and then one or more of the Hands from another place has come to our assistance and acted as a substitute. This has greatly enriched our meetings by bringing us the viewpoints of our fellow-Hands, and enabling them to acquire an intimate experience with the problems facing the Bahá'í world in the course of the prosecution of the Ten Year Crusade.

In view of the vast territories of the Western Hemisphere, and the fact that two of the Hands of the Faith of that area have moved to the Holy Land, for service at the World Centre, it was decided at the recent Conclave of the Hands that in addition to William Sears, Hermann Grossmann should serve as a Hand of the Western Hemisphere for the remainder of the Crusade. He is now in South America, actively assisting the two South American Regional Assemblies in the attainment of their Crusade goals.

Many of the Hands, realizing how little time is left to us to achieve the World Crusade goals of our beloved Guardian are now engaged in extensive travels. Ugo Giachery, is making a tour of Central America. John Robarts, has left Africa for an extended visit to Canada to assist the friends in attaining their home-front goals. Adelbert Muhlschlegel, is spending some months in Scandinavia and Finland, assisting the Regional Assembly of these countries in the all-important work of teaching and consolidation. 'Ali-Akbar Furutan one of the Hands serving in the Holy Land, is at present making a lengthy visit to Iran, encouraging the believers

to arise as pioneers for centres abroad, as well as in Iran itself. Shu'a'u'llah 'Ala'i is visiting centres in the Indian sub-continent, the Northern Pacific region, and Japan. The other continental Hands are carrying on their activities at a heightened pace. At the present time the Hand of the Cause Tarazu'llah Samandari, is working in Haifa on the identification of the handwriting of the innumerable Tablets collected in the International Bahá'í Archives. His long association with the Faith, dating from the days of the Blessed Beauty Himself, has made him familiar to a unique degree with the penmanship of the Bab. Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and their various amanuenses, and ideally fits him for this important service. The prominence of the edifices associated with the World Centre of the Faith is steadily increasing in Israel, like a constellation that mounts the heavens as the hours advance. The peace and beauty which streams from the inner Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and the splendour of the Haram-i-Aqdas which surrounds it; the Shrine of the Bab. the International Archives Building, and the extensive surrounding gardens of both buildings, are becoming recognized more and more as outstanding sites in this country. Indeed it can be truly said that nothing comparable to these buildings and gardens exists anywhere in Israel, or for that matter on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Innumerable postcards, greeting cards, photographs and books publicize the Holy Shrines and their environs in Haifa and 'Akka, A ceaseless stream of tourists from abroad and from different towns in Israel flows into the Shrine gardens daily; tour buses and school buses pour hundreds of sight-seers into the Bahá'í Holy Places; and there can be no doubt that just as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar in America is a great silent teacher, as the Master said it would be, so the Shrines here have likewise become mighty teachers of the Faith. We feel sure that in the future a rich harvest will be reaped from the many souls who have visited their sacred precincts. It is surprising how many of the visitors inform the friends who show them around that they have Bahá'í friends or relatives in other countries. Ten years ago this was a remark rarely heard, but it is now becoming commonplace, and testifies to the extraordinary progress the Faith has made all over the world -- a progress directly attributable to the unremitting labours, the determination and the self-sacrifice of our beloved Guardian.

The plans made by him are continually bearing fruit. Since his passing, with the exception of a few remaining territories in the Soviet zone of influence, every single virgin country specified by him in the Ten Year Crusade has been opened to the Faith. Paul Adams succeeded, as the friends know, in opening Spitzbergen in 1958, and this devoted young Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, after overcoming many difficulties,

was able to return this winter to that far northern outpost. During the last few months Jeanne Frankel and her mother, Elizabeth Bates, were able to enter the Cocos Islands. This goal of the Ten Year Plan had been previously opened to the Faith by Frank Wyss, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh from Australia. Unfortunately he was refused permission to remain, but Jeanne has been more fortunate, and the wonderful news has recently reached us that she now has a group of Bahá'ís in that far-off tropical island. Great indeed is the power of Bahá'u'lláh!

It is not possible to go into details of the progress being made all over the world; however, some of the highlights are indeed thrilling. Recently in Swaziland the Faith has been listed as a fourth religion by the Government. Last year it was possible for Collis Featherstone to visit, at the invitation of some of the Maori chiefs in New Zealand, a centre of Maori culture and to present the Faith to the leaders of the people. As all religious teaching has been forbidden in that area because of the conflicts the different Christian sects aroused amongst the people, this was indeed a unique honour conferred by the Maori leaders upon a representative of our Faith. The chiefs were deeply impressed and requested that literature be left for their people to study. The third all-American Indian Bahá'í Assembly was formed last April in Bolivia, and since then many hundreds of Indians have entered the Faith-outstanding steps toward fulfilment of one of the dearest hopes of the beloved Guardian, who urged the friends on many occasions to remember the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the Divine Plan, that if the original inhabitants of America accepted the Faith they would become as enkindled as the original inhabitants of Arabia who accepted the Prophet Muhammad.

Among the many outstanding advances in Africa may be cited the extraordinary number of enrolments in Uganda and Kenya, which are now on such a scale as to present a serious problem to the administrative bodies responsible. There are just not enough Bahá'ís to keep up with the work of checking the declaration cards that come in! The mass conversion desired and foretold by the beloved Guardian is now taking place in this area, as well as in the Malayan Archipelago and other areas of the Pacific. It presents a great challenge and a wonderful hope for the future. Schools run by Bahá'ís for the Africans are perforce increasing throughout the continent as the Faith spreads and the Bahá'í membership increases so rapidly.

In view of the urgent need for pioneers to fill the goals in Latin America and Europe, it is encouraging to note that there is a strong internal movement of pioneers. At least ten German Bahá'ís have arisen and volunteered to go to the aid

of their sister communities in neighbouring countries. This is a great step forward, as the German Bahá'í Community has had special responsibilities and honours conferred upon it by both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian. In Latin America also, many pioneers are leaving the established communities, to settle in the goal cities where Local Assemblies must be formed this coming Ridvan.

Plans for the construction of the Mother Temple of Europe in Frankfurt are at last beginning to take concrete form. The German National Spiritual Assembly, in view of past frustrating experiences had refused to purchase outright the Temple property until such time as permission to build was assured from the authorities. This now having at last been obtained, the deeds to the property have been transferred to the name of the Assembly. The architect's working drawings are well under way, and as soon as weather permits, actual work on the site will be commenced. As the friends are aware, the Mother Temple of Africa, situated in Kampala, will be dedicated at the beginning of next summer. The Mother Temple of Australia is advancing at a rapid pace, and although the exterior of the building may be completed by the coming Ridvan plans for its dedication are being made for the following year, in other words, 1961. The funds for these two Temples, thanks to the munificence of the beloved Guardian himself, and the generosity of the believers, have been assured; but the greater part of the funds needed to construct the German Temple has still to be raised, and this presents a serious challenge to the Bahá'ís throughout the world in completing this vital goal of the Fourth Phase of the Crusade before 1963.

The many pilgrims who visited the Holy Land will remember how often the beloved Guardian mentioned his heavy burdens, and that he was over-worked and concerned over the multitudinous problems which faced him. This work and these problems have fallen to the lot of the Hands of the Faith, who have been obliged and privileged to assume the burden at the World Centre. We ask the believers to remember us in their prayers as we remember them in ours in the Holy Shrines. We realize that only the grace of Bahá'u'lláh can assist us all-His followers all over the world-to bring to a successful conclusion the mighty plan of our beloved Guardian. We also realize, however, that the grace of God must be attracted by a magnet in this world. The magnet, we know, is purity of heart, dedication in service, obedience to the Divine commands, and willingness to sacrifice. We urge all of the friends, whoever they are and wherever they are serving, whatever their station in life, their age, their education or abilities, to remember their individual and collective responsibility for executing the Plan of God. Let them study the

> *Guardian's World Crusade, and determine in what manner locally, nationally, on the home front or in the international arena they can most effectively assist in laying the foundation of that supreme edifice, the Universal House of Justice.*
>
> *In the service of the beloved Guardian,*
>
> *HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND*

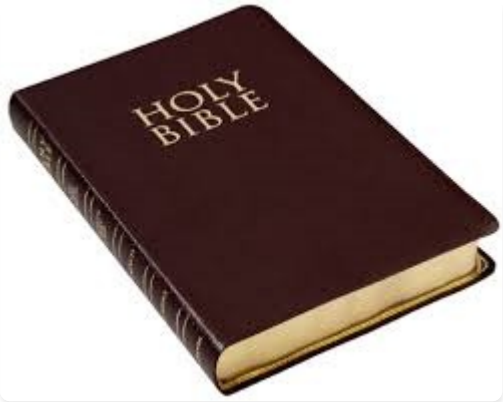
Comments

February 11. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "When 'Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet."

Original file: 0138.html (position #99)

February 11. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) "When 'Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet."

> *When 'Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet (from a letter written to an individual on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 11 February 1944).*



Comments

February 11. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh had no concubine, He had three legal wives. As He married them before the "Aqdas" (His book of laws) was revealed, He was only acting according to the laws of Islám, which had not yet been superseded." He was, in fact, a Bábí.

Original file: 0137.html (position #98)

February 11. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh had no concubine, He had three legal wives. As He married them before the "Aqdas" (His book of laws) was revealed, He was only acting according to the laws of Islám, which had not yet been superseded." He was, in fact, a Bábí and subject to the laws of the Bayan.

> *Dear ...,*

...[personal advice deleted]...

Regarding the wives of Bahá'u'lláh, extracts from letters written on behalf of the beloved Guardian set this subject in context. They indicate that Bahá'u'lláh was "acting according to the laws of Islám, which had not yet been superseded", and that He was following "the customs of the people of His own land":

> *...as regards Bahá'u'lláh's marriage it should be noted that His three marriages were all contracted before He revealed His Book of Laws, and even before His declaration in Baghdád, at a time when Bahá'í marriage laws had not yet been known, and the Revelation not yet disclosed.*
>
> *(25 May 1938 to a National Spiritual Assembly)*
>
> *Bahá'u'lláh had no concubine, He had three legal wives. As He married them before the "Aqdas" (His book of laws) was revealed, He was only acting according to the laws of Islám, which had not yet been superseded. He made plurality of wives conditional upon justice; 'Abdu'l-Bahá interpreted this to mean that a man may not have more than one wife at a time, as it is impossible to be just to two or more women in marriage.*
>
> *(11 February 1944 to an individual believer)*
>
> *...Bahá'u'lláh married the first and second wives while He was still in Tihrán, and the third wife while He was in Baghdád. At that time, the Laws of the "Aqdas" had not been revealed, and secondly, He was following the Laws of the previous Dispensation and the customs of the people of His own land.*
>
> *(14 January 1953 to an individual believer)*

The three wives of Bahá'u'lláh were:

Nawáb (Asíyih Khánum): married some time between 24 September and 22 October 1835; died 1886; seven children.

Mahd-i-'Ulyá (Fátimih Khánum): born 1828; married 1849; died 1904; six children. She broke the Covenant after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh as did all her children. See God Passes By (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), chapter 15.

Gawhar Khánum: married in Baghdád; died during the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; one child. She and her daughter both broke the Covenant after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. See God Passes By, chapter 15.

On the subject of monogamy, it is stated in note 89 of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:

> *Polygamy is a very ancient practice among the majority of humanity. The introduction of monogamy has been only gradually accomplished by the Manifestations of God. Jesus, for example, did not prohibit polygamy, but abolished divorce except in the case of fornication; Muhammad limited the number of wives to four, but making plurality of wives contingent on justice, and reintroducing permission for divorce; Bahá'u'lláh, Who was revealing His Teachings in the milieu of a Muslim society, introduced the question of monogamy gradually in accordance with the principles of wisdom and the progressive unfoldment of His purpose. The fact that He left His followers with an infallible Interpreter of His Writings enabled Him to outwardly permit two wives in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas but uphold a condition that enabled 'Abdu'l-Bahá to elucidate later that the intention of the law was to enforce monogamy.*

On page 39 of A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i -Aqdas it is stated that "Plurality of wives is forbidden." The note explaining this appears on page 59 and states:

> *The text of the Aqdas upholds monogamy, but as it appears also to permit bigamy, the Guardian was asked for a clarification, and in reply his secretary wrote on his behalf: "Regarding Bahá'í marriage; in the light of the Master's Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice, and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practised."*

The House of Justice assures you that it will pray in the Holy Shrines for your

> *guidance as you consider the many important decisions which face you at this stage in your life.*
>
> *Sincerely,*
>
> *For Department of the Secretariat*

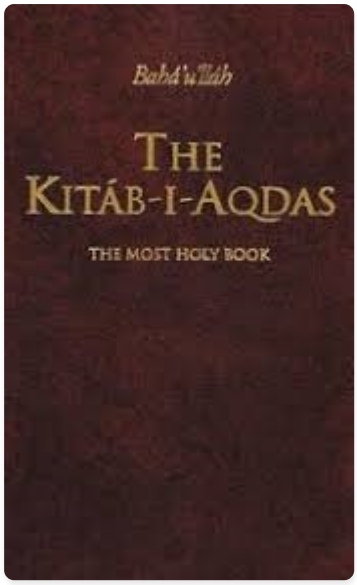
Bahá'u'lláh was 18 years old when he married his first wife, Ásíyih, who was fifteen years old. Bahá'u'lláh became a Bábí in 1844, at the age of 27, and Ásíyih became a Bábí that same year at the age of 23.

Bahá'u'lláh's second wife, Fatimih, was twenty years old when she married Bahá'u'lláh in 1849.

In 1862, Bahá'u'lláh married his third wife, Gawhar, who was actually a servant of his first wife Ásíyih. The age at marriage of Gawhar is unknown.

At the time Bahá'u'lláh married Fatimih in 1849 and Gawhar in 1862, he was a Bábí and subject to the laws of the Bayan. At the time of his marriage to his third wife, Gawhar, he continued to have children with his second wife, Fatimih. While there is no English translation of the Persian Bayan, there is a French translation which addresses this topic...

> *Bayan Persan - UNITE 7 - PORTE 15*
>
> *Dans ceci qu'il est obligatoire pour un chacun de prendre une femme afin que reste de lui quelqu'un qui unifie Dieu, son Seigneur. Certes il faut s'efforcer d'avoir un enfant (ou de se marier). Si se manifeste d'un homme ou d'une femme l'impuissance à avoir un enfant, il est licite pour l'époux non impuissant (quel qu'il soit) de se remarier à nouveau après en avoir obtenu l'autorisation de l'autre partie, mais non sans sa permission. Et ce afin que se manifeste de cet époux ou de cette épouse un enfant.*



Comments

February 11. On this date in 1941, Margaret Stevenson died. She was the first New Zealand member of the Bahá'í Faith. She served on the NSA of Australia and New Zealand from 1934 to 1939 and was in the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims to Haifa from Australia and New Zealand.

Original file: 0136.html (position #97)

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On February 10, 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims to Haifa from the Australia and New Zealand left Melbourne, arriving in Haifa on March 13. The party consisted of Effie Baker, Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh). Effie Baker was an Australian photographer who became a follower of the Bahá'í Faith in 1922. Some of the pictures she took of the Bahá'í monuments in Iraq and Iran were included in Shoghi

Effendi's translation of Nabíl-i-A`zam's The Dawn-Breakers. On September 3, 1892, a few months after Bahá'u'lláh's death, Nabíl-i-A'ẓam, the author of *The Dawn-breakers*, died. Parts of his body and clothing were found washed up on the coast in Acre. While Bahá'í sources attribute his death to suicide, other sources claim he was murdered.

Sources that allege Nabíl-i-A'ẓam was murdered base their claim on the allegation that he became a victim due to his support of Mírzá Muhammad `Alí in his conflict with 'Abdu'l-Bahá...

> *According to the memoirs of Baha's son Mirza Badiullah surnamed the Most Luminous Branch (غصن/نور) by Baha: One year after Baha's death, Nabil visited Badiullah in Haifa. He was distressed. Nabil said to Badiullah: "I can no longer stay at Acre. The situation there has deteriorated. By dint of violence, abusive language and cursing, one has to act against his own faith, has to regard and hold the Most Mighty Branch [Ghusn-i Azam, i.e. Abdul Baha Abbas] superior in station to the Blessed Beauty [Janab-i Mubarak, i.e. Baha] has to write corrupted [versions of] all the holly writings and epistles, and has to vilify and excommunicate [Baha's] sons, [Baha's] words and [Baha's] family [i.e. all the members of Baha's household in opposition to Abdul Baha Abbas], failing which one is branded as covenant-breaker [Naqiz] or Vacillator [Mutezalzil, i.e. opposed to Abdul Baha Abbas and partisan of Muhammad Ali] and becomes the object of untold calumnies and falsehoods."* ***Nabil requested Badiullah to find him a suitable room at the foot of Mount Carmel. He went back to Acre to fetch his things. Nothing was heard of him for sometime. Later "limbs of his body and his clothing" were discovered near the see shores at Acre. These were collated together and buried. Abdul Baha Abbas "shed crocodile tears" during the burial service of Nabil, "although he was exceedingly annoyed with him."***

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled "NABIL-E AʿẒAM ZARANDI, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD"...

Comments

February 12. On this date in 1990, the UHJ announced the "Establishment of the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace" at the University of Maryland, which they called the "first initiative by a well-founded, significant institution of higher learning to formulate such a serious program of Bahá'í studies."

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Original file: 0135.html (position #96)

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> *Establishmnent of the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace*

12 FEBRUARY 1990

To the Bahá'ís of the World

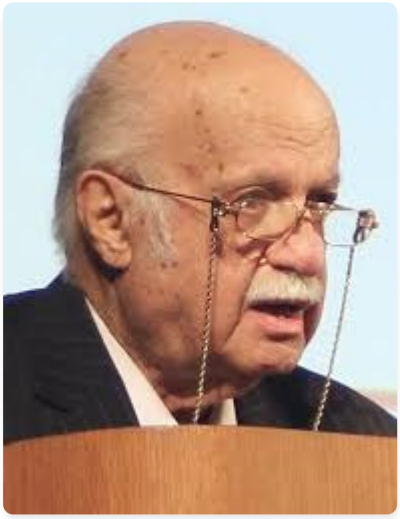
With feelings of thankfulness and joy we announce an achievement of immense importance to the accelerating progress of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The University of Maryland and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States recently signed a memorandum of understanding, establishing "The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace" at that University's Center for International Development and Conflict Management. The stated purpose of the Chair is "to conduct and publish research, design courses and conduct seminars in the field of Bahá'í studies and world peace within an interdisciplinary context; to initiate public forums for discussing the issues proposed in the Statement of the Universal House of Justice entitled The Promise of World Peace; and to establish academic linkages with and provide technical assistance to Bahá'í institutions in the fields of peace education and international development."

***This first initiative by a well-founded, significant institution of higher learning to formulate such a serious program of Bahá'í studies** is a direct response to the Peace Statement, as is borne out by a letter addressed to us by the Director of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management in which he said: "With this letter I am answering on behalf of CIDCM and the University of Maryland your call: 'If the Bahá'í experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study.'"*

Fully cognizant of Bahá'u'lláh's praise of knowledge as "wings to man's life" and of the importance which He assigns to its acquisition; of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's advice that we should "seek to impart the Message to influential persons and become a cause of guidance to the learned and distinguished"; and of Shoghi Effendi's call for a "resolute attempt" to reinforce measures "for the establishment of closer contact with the leaders of public thought, with colleges and universities," we hail this seminal development both as a mark of the Faith's emergence from obscurity and as the harbinger of that day when hosts of scholars will devote their energies to the exploration, exposition and defense of the dynamic principles animating the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, thereby fulfilling the need identified by the beloved Guardian for "well-read and well-educated people, capable of correlating our teachings to the current thoughts of the leaders of society." On that day, we shall witness an expansion and consolidation of the community as has not yet been

> *experienced.*
>
> *May the Blessed Beauty enable the new Bahá'í Chair for World Peace to achieve its laudable purpose; may He shower upon all who support it His abundant confirmations.*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice*

Moshe Sharon, Professor Emeritus of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he serves as Chair in Bahá'í Studies, is interviewed in the 2007 Israeli documentary film, "Bahais in My Backyard." In the interview he states that the only Bahá'í academic chair in the world is in Israel due to his efforts in convincing Hebrew University to establish one and his efforts in finding a benefactor to fund the position. He also says that there are no descendants of Bahá'u'lláh in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, there are in fact dozens, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters is featured in the film. Furthermore, even at the time of the interview, there were other Bahá'í academic chairs in existence, such as the ones established at Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, a state university in Madhya Pradesh, in 1991 and at the University of Maryland in 1993.



Comments

February 12. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society where he stated "everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and ...."

Original file: 0134.html (position #95)

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February 12. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society, as reported in the "Star of the West" magazine..

> *Praise be to God, that Dr Zamenhof has created the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort, for in this matter he has served his fellowmen well. He has constructed a language which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it gives promise of universal acceptation. Therefore* ***everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto. In the future two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other the international auxiliary language.*** *Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study 50 languages and yet travel through a country and still be at a loss. I, myself, know several of the Oriental languages, but know no Western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.*
>
> ***Please send some teachers to Persia, if you can, so that they may teach Esperanto to the young people. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.***
>
> *I hope that it will be promulgated very rapidly - then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the body politic will be fully informed of the thoughts of all*

This talk was also covered in J.E. Esselmont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the chapter entitled *Universal Language*:

> *At an Esperanto banquet given in Paris in February 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:—*
>
> *Today one of the chief causes of the differences in Europe is the diversity of languages. We say this man is a German, the other is an Italian, then we meet an*

Englishman and then again a Frenchman. Although they belong to the same race, yet language is the greatest barrier between them. Were a universal auxiliary language in operation they would all be considered as one.

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this international language more than forty years ago. He says that as long as an international language is not adopted, complete union between the various sections of the world will be unrealized, for we observe that misunderstandings keep people from mutual association, and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through an international auxiliary language.

Generally speaking, the whole people of the Orient are not fully informed of events in the West, neither can the Westerners put themselves in sympathetic touch with the Easterners; their thoughts are enclosed in a casket—the international language will be the master key to open it. Were we in possession of a universal language, the Western books could easily be translated into that language, and the Eastern peoples be informed of their contents. In the same way the books of the East could be translated into that language for the benefit of the people in the West. The greatest means of progress towards the union of East and West will be a common language. It will make the whole world one home and become the strongest impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity. It will make the earth one universal commonwealth. It will be the cause of love between the children of men. It will cause good fellowship between the various races.

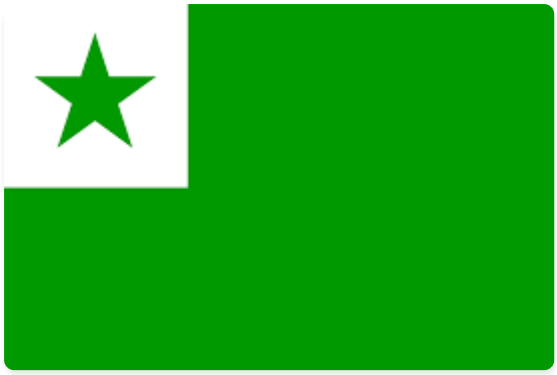
Now, praise be to God that Dr. Zamenhof has invented the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of becoming the international means of communication. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for this noble effort; for in this way he has served his fellowmen well. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees Esperanto will become universal. Therefore every one of us must study this language and spread it as far as possible so that day by day it may receive a broader recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world, and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that Esperanto will be adopted as the language of all the future international conferences and congresses, so that all people need acquire only two languages—one their own tongue and the other the international language. Then

> ***perfect union will be established between all the people of the world. Consider how difficult it is today to communicate with various nations. If one studies fifty languages one may yet travel through a country and not know the language. Therefore I hope that you will make the utmost effort, so that this language of Esperanto may be widely spread.***

In the past, Bahá'ís were more active in learning and encouraging the learning of Esperanto, and the links between Esperanto and the Bahá'í Faith are numerous. Ehsan Yarshater, the ex-Bahá'í founder and editor of Encyclopedia Iranica, notes how as a child in Iran he learned and taught Esperanto and that when his mother was visiting Haifa he wrote her a letter in Persian as well as Esperanto. L.L. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia Zamenhof was a convert to the Bahá'í Faith. At the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Agnes Baldwin Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used it to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences in Japan.

Due to the failure of Esperanto to gain significant traction, however, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements have been backtracked, such that Shoghi Effendi said

> *Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that* ***while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future.*** *Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.*



Comments

February 12. On this date in 1956, on this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining that "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order..

Original file: 0133.html (position #94)

February 12. On this date in 1956, on this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining that "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do

with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)*

On March 26, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer told him how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

> *1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order*
>
> *"As regards your question about the Masonic Order, he considers that the honest and courageous thing for you to do is to inform your Lodge that you no longer consider yourself, for purely personal reasons, a Mason; and would like to have your name taken off their list. If they should press you for an explanation, which he imagines is unlikely, everybody being free to do as they please in this world, you can explain to them that in the present chaotic period the world is passing through, with so many streams and counterstreams of political thoughts and prejudices of all kinds, racial, religious, etc., storming the minds of men, that you wish to disentangle yourself from all association with the past and to stand alone, free in your own ideas.*
>
> *"He does not think that such an explanation will prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 26, 1956)*

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he*

> *would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, Bahá'í-Mohammedan."

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*
>
> *Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: "Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, 'Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.' Now the same condition prevails."*
>
> *This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, "What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?" let them answer: "We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."*

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was

published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*
>
> *"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.*
>
> *"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)*

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like

*"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.*

"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of

teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

On February 17, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

1388. Bahá'ís Requested to Withdraw from Masonic and Other Secret Societies

"As regards your question about Masonry, the Bahá'ís, the Guardian feels very strongly, must learn at the present time to think internationally and not locally. Although each believer realizes that he is a member of one great spiritual family, a member of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he does not often carry this thought through to its logical conclusion: which is that if the Bahá'ís all over the

world each belong to some different kind of society or church or political party, the unity of the Faith will be destroyed, because inevitably they will become involved in doctrines and policies that are in some way against our Teachings, and often against another group of people in another part of the world, or another race, or another religious block.

"Therefore, all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies in order to be entirely free to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a united body. Such groups as Masonry, however high the local standard may be, are in other countries gradually being influenced by the issues sundering the nations at present.

"The Guardian wants the Bahá'ís to disentangle themselves from anything that may in any way, now or in the future, compromise their independent status as Bahá'ís and the supra-national nature of their Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 17, 1956)

Almost exactly a year earlier, on February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)

Comments

February 12. On this date in 1980 Hasan Balyuzi, Hand of the Cause of God, died in London after suffering a stroke.

Original file: 0132.html (position #93)

February 12. On this date in 1980 Hasan Balyuzi died in London. He was born in 1908 in Shiraz and was an Afnan from both sides of his family. In 1925, he met Shoghi Effendi while traveling to Lebanon to study at the American University of Beirut, where he was present at the same time as some his cousins Munib Shahid and Soheil Afnan. In 1932 Balyuzi went to London where he studied diplomatic history at the London School of Economics. He would make is career as broadcaster in the Persian Section of the BBC.

In 1933 was elected as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Great Britain, a post he held until he retired in 1960. He was, later, also a member of the Auxiliary Board and in 1957, appointed a Hand of the Cause of God.

In 1941 he married professional ballerina Mary (Molly) Brown with whom he had five sons (Hushang, Robert, Felix, Richard and Simeon).

On February 15 he was buried at the New Southgate Cemetary, near Shoghi Effendi's grave. On February 12, 2015, Hasan Balyuzi's wish that his enormous collection of papers and books be made available in a research library “for the benefit of all who seek knowledge” was fulfilled with the opening of the Afnan Library.

Comments

February 13. On this date in 1913, 'Abdul Bahá addressed the Paris Theosophical Society, telling them that "The world of creation has had no beginning and will have no end."

February 13. On this date in 1913, 'Abdul Bahá addressed the Paris Theosophical Society, telling them that "The world of creation has had no beginning and will have no end."

> *CHAPTER VII*
>
> *ADDRESS DELIVERED BY ABDUL BAHA*
>
> *To the Paris Theosophical Society, at the Theosophical*
>
> *Headquarters, 59 Avenue de la Bourdonnois,*
>
> *February 13, 1913*
>
> ***ACCORDING to science, all forms of creation are endowed with life**; this element of life and energy depending on environment and adaptations. Life as an attribute of growth is manifest to a minute degree in the mineral kingdom. It is more powerfully manifested in the vegetable kingdom and when we study the animal world we observe that the power of life is expressing itself through more*

capable mediums, showing manifold attributes. Ascending to the human kingdom we find that life, or what is figuratively called spirit, is declaring itself with knowledge in the utmost power and transcendency.

The more man strives along the degrees of attainment, the greater will be the unfoldment. The child born to the mother manifests this element of life in a more abundant degree than the child in the matrix. The display of the forces of life upon the arena of existence is incomparably greater than that of the dark and narrow world in which the babe lived for nine months. But when life attains to the summit of maturity, then its manifestations will be along many paths and cover many fields hitherto undreamed of.

Spirit in the human world is the discoverer of the realities of existence. All the inventions, all the sciences, all the hidden mysteries are brought to light through the activity of the spirit on the plane of life. While living in the Orient it organizes affairs in the Occident; while living on the earth it discovers the heavenly constellations. These examples ought to show you that the spirit of life is omnipotent, especially when it establishes a communication with God and becomes the recipient of the eternal light — then it transforms itself into a ray of the effulgence of the eternal sun.

This station is the greatest of all stations, for this connection of the spirit of man with God is like unto a mirror and the sun of reality is reflected in it. Thus it becomes the collective center of all the virtues; its emanation is the bestowal of the king of bestowers; its radiations are the manifold splendors of the infinite luminary; its sanctity is from the highest summit of divine essence. This station is the station of heavenly inspiration and is called the station of the divine grace. It signifies that the rays of the sun of reality are resplendent in the mirror and the attributes of the sun of reality are reflected therein. This is the ultimate degree of human perfection, for the attainment of which the thinkers and philosophers of all time have longed and poets have dreamed; it is the mystery of mysteries and the light of lights wherein the spirit becomes eternal, self-subsistent, age-abiding.

When we look upon the world of creation from another standpoint, the analytic, we observe that everything is the result of composition of many single atoms which through the law of affiliation have adhered and according to the shape, order and positions of these atoms, a given being steps forth into the court of objectivity. Every single atom of these aggregate atoms has its myriad transferences as has been proved by science.

Every single atom has its coursings throughout all the kingdoms of life. For instance, that which has gone into the composition of a human being was at one time in the mineral kingdom. Along the degrees of the mineral kingdom it journeyed, appearing in various forms and reflecting various images, manifesting a peculiar virtue in each. In the vegetable kingdom, it again partook of many experiences and through each experience became adorned with an added attribute. Having perfected its journeyings here, it entered the animal kingdom and was incarnated throughout multitudes of animal forms and finally, in the human kingdom it traversed endless forms of humanity, in each form of composition showing forth a particular aspect of the one power.

The forms of life are infinite, therefore the transferences of this primordial unit throughout the degrees of creation are infinite.

All phenomena are involved in all phenomena. Consider what a transcendent unity exists, that, from this standpoint, every monad is the expression of all life. This is the harmony which underlies all creation; this is the law and order in the world of existence. What wondrous symmetry! What stupendous organization! What divine completeness! What elysian co-ordination! What celestial union!

Every single manifestation of the myriad forms of creation is a reflection of the divine emanations, therefore the divine emanations are infinite, unlimited and illimitable. Gaze upward through immeasurable space to the majestic order of the colossal suns. These luminous bodies are numberless. Behind our solar system there are unfathomable stellar systems and above those stellar systems are the remote aggregations of the milky way. ***Extend your vision beyond the fixed stars and again you shall behold many spheres of light.*** *In brief, the creation of the Almighty is beyond the grasp of the human intellect. When this objective creation is unlimited and not subject to suspension, is not the subjective creation of His Majesty the Almighty limitless? When the reflection or physical creation is infinite, how is it possible to circumscribe the reality which is the basis of divine creation? The spiritual world is so much greater than the physical that in comparison with it the physical world is non-existent.*

Reflect that every human being is limited through his physical body, but his spirit is free. The body of man may travel for a few miles and become fatigued, but the spirit untrammeled may go throughout the immensity of space. While walking on earth man's thoughts may grasp the motions of the heavenly bodies and define

their course. This demonstrates how man's spirit transcends his environment.

The divine grace, whether physical or spiritual, is unlimited, yet certain selfish souls desire to circumscribe to their own ideas the outpouring of this heavenly grace. Oh, the ignorant ones! They have declared that the age of this world, for example, is ten thousand years. By this is meant that the descent of the heavenly bestowals has extended only over that period, while in reality it is omnipresent. We cannot state reasonably that this world is ten thousand or one hundred thousand or one hundred million years old, for the divine rays have ever descended upon man.

***The world of creation has had no beginning and will have no end**, because it is the arena upon which the attributes and qualities of the spirit are being manifested. Can we limit God and his power? In the same manner we cannot limit his creations and attributes. Just as the reality of divinity is limitless, likewise his grace and bounties are limitless.*

The supreme bestowal is the appearance of the heavenly messengers. How can we ever define or circumscribe this bestowal? If the scientists have proven that a molecule is an aggregate of myriads of atoms and the atom in turn is an aggregate of infinite electrons, how can the sun be comprehended? If the drop is infinite in its particles, how much more the sea? If the material world is infinite with regard to its manifestations of life, can the spiritual world be finite? The prophets of God have ever appeared in the ages of the past and will continue to appear throughout the ages of the future. Where was Adam when God was exercising his divinity? Where was this petty infinitesimal world of ours when God was bestowing his bounties upon this infinite universe? If we limit the number of his appearances through his prophets, it is equal to limiting God himself.

Man has ever longed for a direct means of communication with his Lord and has ever been in a state of anticipation for the unique advent on this earth of a divine being. The followers of all religions have been expecting the coming of a promised one and have longingly prayed for the dawn of the sun of truth. Alas! A thousand times alas! that when he appeared they remained of the heedless, nor turned their faces toward him. Pitiful indeed is their condition! In lamentation, during the darkness of night they prayed for the light of a new day; but when it dawned from the eastern horizon they cried clamorously: "Where is the sun? We do not see it!" They are of those who are bereft of sight.

Two thousand years ago the Israelites expected the Messiah. Day and night they were praying in the temple, supplicating in the holy of holies, crying, "O God, send to us the true one, our deliverer and redeemer" — thus they lamented and bemoaned his delay. But when His Holiness the Christ appeared they jeeringly turned away; when the orb of reality dawned they could not see it, for their eyes were covered with the veils of traditions and names. These anxious waiting ones did not become the recipients of that bestowal; nor harken to the call of God; nor quaff from the chalice of love; nor behold the rays of the sun of reality. It is now nearly two thousand years since their Messiah appeared and still they await him!

May our eyes be ever awake; may the windows of our minds be flung awide, so that when the messenger appeareth, we may not be deprived of his glory through the veils of preconceived ideas; so that when the heavenly herald shouts the word of God, we may not be deaf; so that when the holy fragrance of the paradise of the Almighty be diffused, our nostrils may not be afflicted with cold. May we be enabled to inhale the perfume, behold the splendor, hearken to the voice and be regenerated with the spirit of the new day.

Then our life will be revivified, we shall enjoy eternal existence, be refreshed with the breath of the Holy Spirit and become informed of the mysteries of creation. Then we shall be inspired to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity; we shall take a portion of the divine grace and become resplendent with the rays of the heavenly luminary; then the human race will mirror forth the attributes of the eternal kingdom and will move like a peaceful sea and each individual will appear as a wave. As we look upon the sea, we will comprehend it as the sea of God; as we look upon the waves, we will realize that they are the souls of humanity. The sun is one; all light is one; the rays are one; it shines on all.

This century is the century of the oneness of the world of humanity, the century of justice; this century is the century of universal peace, the century of the dawn of the sun of reality; this century is the century of the establishment of the kingdom of God upon this earth; therefore let us grasp every means to promote the federation of the world, that we may become the recipients of the divine outpourings.

Today we observe that various means of unity are being brought forward and this in itself is an evidence that the divine confirmations surround us.

One sign of unity is the construction of an international auxiliary language, Esperanto.

Let us strive untiringly to spread this language.

I am most pleased with you and am very grateful to find myself in such a revered gathering.

I shall remember your spiritual susceptibilities and pray that they may be directed toward the highest, that your love for your Lord and your attraction toward him may increase day unto day. I hope that this revered society may become conducive to the illumination of the city of Paris, in order that the blind may receive sight; the deaf hearing; the dumb the power of speech; and that into these dead bodies the spirit of life may be infused. Then this Paris will become another Paris and this world another world.

After Abdul Bahá had taken his seat, at the request of the friends he again mounted the rostrum and offered the following

SUPPLICATION

O GOD, O MY LORD, I SUPPLICATE TO THEE AND IMPLORE IN THY PRESENCE AND INVOKE THEE WITH THE TONGUE OF MY CONSCIENCE, MY SOUL, MY SPIRIT, MY MIND, TO SHOWER DOWN THY MERCIFUL BESTOWALS UPON THESE HOLY SOULS WHO HAVE GATHERED IN THIS GREAT ASSEMBLY. I BEG OF THEE, O MY LORD, TO FAVOR THEM WITH THE GLANCES OF THY POWER. I ENTREAT THEE, O MY BELOVED, TO POUR UPON THEM THE RAIN OF THY FAVOR FROM THE CLOUDS OF THY MERCY. VERILY THESE ARE THY SERVANTS AND THY MAIDSERVANTS. DEPRIVE THEM NOT OF THE SUNBEAMS OF REALITY; MAKE THEM LIKE WAVES OF THY OCEAN AND LEAVE THEM NOT TO THE DARKNESS OF THEMSELVES. O LORD, ENLIGHTEN THEIR HEARTS WITH THE LIGHT OF UNITY; CHEER THEIR SPIRITS WITH THE MYSTIC TRACES OF THY KNOWLEDGE; ILLUMINE THEIR EYES WITH BEHOLDING THY SIGNS; PURIFY THEIR SOULS WITH THE WONDERS OF THY MAJESTY; INSPIRE THEIR CONSCIENCES WITH THE WORD OF THY SINGLENESS; ENCIRCLE THEM WITH THY HEAVENLY GRACES. VERILY THOU ART THE OMNIPOTENT, THE MIGHTY. O LORD! THOU SEEST THE HEARTS OF HUMBLENESS BEFORE THY DOMINION, THE SOULS REJOICED WITH THY PROCLAMATIONS, THE

SPIRITS ATTRACTED BY THY HOLY FRAGRANCES. O LORD, CONFIRM US IN THY GOOD PLEASURE, ASSIST US IN THY ADORATION AND CAUSE US TO BECOME WORTHY SERVANTS TURNING OUR FACES TOWARD THE HORIZON OF THY SINGLENESS ILLUMINED WITH THE RAYS OF THE SUN OF THY REALITY.

VERILY THOU ART THE CLEMENT, THE BOUNTEOUS AND VERILY THOU ART THE MOST MERCIFUL OF THE MERCIFUL!

Comments

February 13. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that the North American Bahá'í Community may yet emerge triumphant over the prevailing crisis..dauntless valor and heroic self-sacrifice, and vindicate its right to primacy in the world community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh."

Original file: 0130.html (position #91)

February 13. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that the North American Bahá'í Community may yet emerge triumphant over the prevailing crisis..dauntless valor and heroic self-sacrifice, and vindicate its right to primacy in the world community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh."

> *Hope is welling up in my anxious, overburdened heart that the North American*

Bahá'í Community may yet emerge triumphant over the prevailing crisis, demonstrate its capacity to preserve its hard-won prizes and redeem its pledges through a further display of its qualities of unconquerable faith, unbreakable solidarity, dauntless valor and heroic self-sacrifice, and vindicate its right to primacy in the world community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. High water mark is still unattained notwithstanding the mounting tide of enthusiastic response displayed by an aroused community. Dangerous passage now forded in this eleventh-hour campaign. I am fervently praying that further intensification of effort, sustained, coordinated, consecrated and unanimously exerted, will sweep its members on crest of the wave to total victory. I feel assured that cumulative efforts of participants in emergency campaign launched by entire community will increasingly attract the promised inflowing grace of the holy Author of its destinies, will demonstrate afresh its worthiness of the paternal care of its divine Founder, will win added commendation from its sister communities of the Eastern Hemisphere, deepen the admiration and inspire the emulation of its daughter communities in Latin America and the European continent, and strengthen the attachment and reinforce the brotherly affection of its Guardian.

[February 13, 1948]

Comments

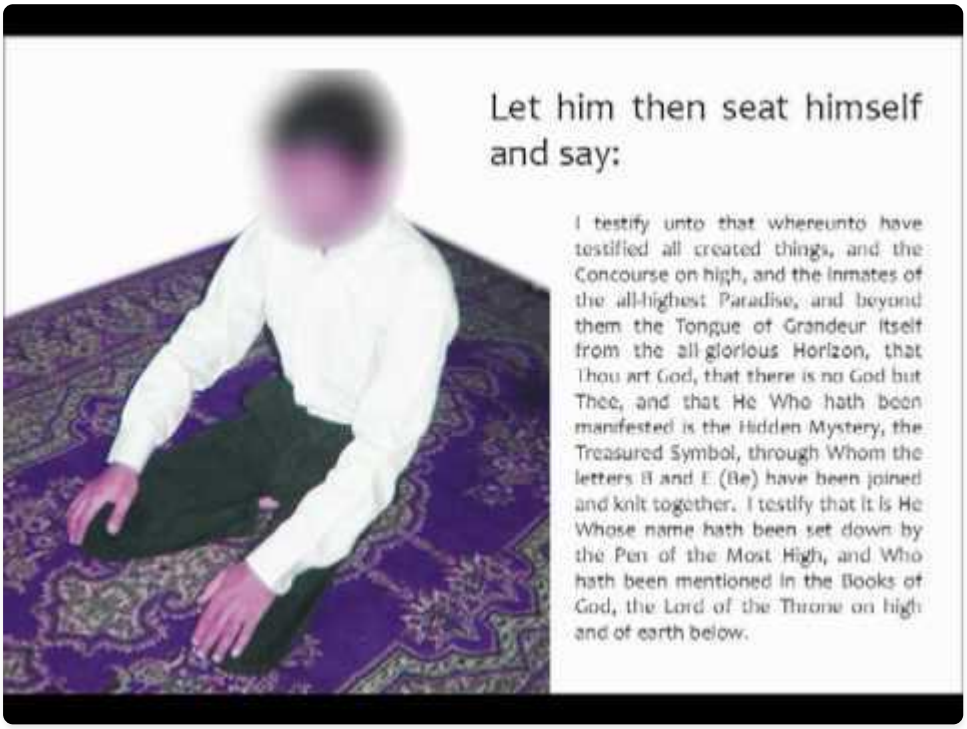
February 13. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer."

Original file: 0129.html (position #90)

February 13. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer."

> *1534. Instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer*
>
> *"The Universal House of Justice received your letter of 7 January 1975, enquiring about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer, and has asked us to give you this reply.*
>
> *"In following the direction stating: 'Let him then stand and raise his hands twice in supplication, and say ... ': the believer does not have to read twice the paragraph which follows. Whether the believer raises his hands twice before the reciting of the paragraph, or commences the reciting after having raised his hands once, and raises them a second time soon thereafter, is left to his choice.*
>
> *"As to the direction which states: 'Let him then raise his hands thrice, and say ... ', an individual believer asked the beloved Guardian the following question:*
>
> > *'...the direction to raise the hands thrice and say "Greater is God than every great one." Does this mean after every raising of the hands, or only to be*

> *said once, after the three raisings?'*
>
> *"Shoghi Effendi's secretary answered on his behalf as follows: 'The hands should be raised three times and each time the sentence be repeated in conjunction with the act.'"*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, February 13, 1975: Ibid.)*


Let him then seat himself and say:
I testify unto that whereunto have testified all created things, and the Concourse on high, and the inmates of the all-highest Paradise, and beyond them the Tongue of Grandeur itself from the all glorious Horizon, that Thou art God, that there is no God but Thee, and that He Who hath been manifested is the Hidden Mystery, the Treasured Symbol, through Whom the letters B and E (Be) have been joined and knit together. I testify that it is He Whose name hath been set down by the Pen of the Most High, and Who hath been mentioned in the Books of God, the Lord of the Throne on high and of earth below.

Comments

February 13. On this date in 1926, August Rudd, the first Swedish Bahá'í pioneer, died.

February 13. On this date in 1926, August Rudd, the first Swedish Bahá'í pioneer, died.

Comments

February 14. On this date in 2009, one of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Istanbul, Turkey.

Original file: 0127.html (position #88)

February 14. On this date in 2009, one of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Istanbul, Turkey.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have

previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the

International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

Comments

February 14. On this date in 1957, the foundation stone of the first Bahá'í House of Worship of Africa, designed by Charles Mason Remey, was laid in Kampala, Uganda. Enoch Olinga, named a Hand of the Cause of God later that year, was present for the ceremony.

Original file: 0126.html (position #87)

February 14. On this date in 1957, the foundation stone of the first Bahá'í House of Worship of Africa, designed by Charles Mason Remey, was laid in Kampala, Uganda. Enoch Olinga, named a Hand of the Cause of God later that year, was present for the ceremony.

Charles Mason Remey was an early and active Bahá'í who, along with Howard C. Struven, became the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian.

Mason Remey based his claim to be the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith the idea that

by appointing him as President of the International Bahá'í Council, the embryonic form of the Universal House of Justice which would be led by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi had in fact implicitly named him as the second Guardian. Mason Remey's claim was largely rejected with several notable exceptions, including five members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France led by Joel Marangella. The remaining 26 Hands of the Cause unanimously declared Remey and whoever followed him Covenant-breakers.

Born to a Christian family of the Iteso ethnic group in Uganda, **Enoch Olinga** became a Bahá'í in Kampala in 1952. In 1953 he became the first pioneer to British Cameroon, and was given the title Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for that country. As the number of Bahá'ís grew in Cameroon new Bahá'ís left the immediate region to pioneer in other surrounding areas, each becoming a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh including Ghana, and Togo. Because of the successive waves of people becoming Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, Enoch Olinga was entitled "Abd'l-Futuh", a Persian name meaning "the father of victories" by Shoghi Effendi.

In October 1957 Shoghi Effendi appointed him as a Hand of the Cause of God. Olinga chaired the opening session of the first Bahá'í World Congress (in 1963) which announced the election of the first Universal House of Justice after which he travelled all over the world.

On September 16, 1979, Enoch Olinga was killed. A close associate of Ugandan President Idi Amin, who was deposed and exiled on April 11, 1979, Enoch Olinga, his wife, and three of his five children were murdered by unknown gunmen on September 16, 1979, during the administration of President Milton Obote when people affiliated with the Amin regime were being systematically targeted. Denis MacEoin touches on this topic in his 1979 *Letter on Bahá'í attitudes towards politics and scholarship*.

One day after his murder, on September 17, 1979, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote a poem, "On Hearing of Enoch's Murder."

The sunlight is black

The sunlight is black

What raven wing

Covered my sun at noonday?

In my mouth is the salt of tears

I cannot swallow so much salt . . .

Blood is so beautiful

Blood is so pure

Why do the people let blood

Run in the street?

So long it took

To make this man

Noble and good

His mind and his soul

Expanded like sunlight

At noonday.

Why did you kill him?

Are you pleased at this riddled shell,

This mangle of bone and flesh?

Did you think your deed in the dark

Was a bright light?

Everything is pulsing,

Throbbing and throbbing!

There is no answer

And the sunlight is black.

Go Enoch go!

Go to Musa on the hill

Go to your Master

Go to your Guardian

Go to the Kingdom of Light!

But ask not of us

Nor of your people

Who have plucked a sin

Big enough and dark enough

To blot out the noonday sun!

Woe to Africa!

Weep as you have not wept before,

Weep on your knees,

Weep your eyes blind,

You have murdered Abu'l-Futœh,

The Father of Victories is dead

At your hand, at your hand!

Your jeweled crown

page laced by God on your head

Is rolled into the grave---

Weep, weep, weep your heart away.

Comments

February 14. On this date in 1910, Ola Pawlowska was born in Łąkta, Poland. Later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to St. Pierre and Miquelon, she died on April 2, 2004, in Newfoundland.

February 14. On this date in 1910, Ola Pawlowska was born in Łąkta, Poland. Later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to St. Pierre and Miquelon, she died on April 2, 2004, in Newfoundland.

February 14. On this date in 1910, Ola Pawlowska was born in Łąkta, Poland. She would later be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to the St. Pierre and Miquelon. "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh" was a title conferred to Bahá'ís who introduced the Bahá'í Faith to new territories during the Ten Year Crusade.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak

Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Ola Pawłowska

Comments

Baha'i History - February 14. On this date in 1876, Keith Ransom-Kehler was born. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God, she died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, for which she is considered the first American Bahá’í martyr.

Original file: 0124.html (position #85)

February 14. On this date in 1876, Keith Ransom-Kehler was born. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God, she died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, for which she is considered the first American Bahá’í martyr. Interestingly, May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá’í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi, but Lidia Zamenhof, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá’í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940 : "'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's

death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering."

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946: "Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr."

In fact, **the description of Lidia Zamenhof's life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.**

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:*
>
> > *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*
>
> *His response was decisive:*
>
> > *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*
>
> *Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:*
>
> > *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*

> *She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.*
>
> *She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.*

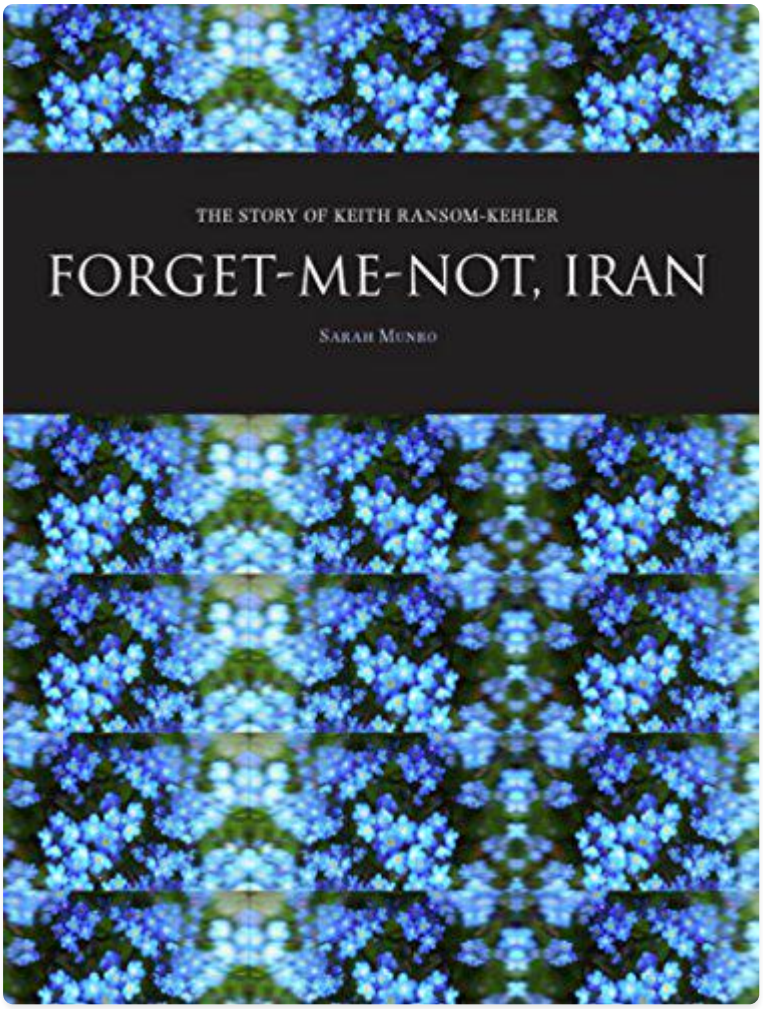
From the following section:

> *Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:*
>
> > *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*
>
> *In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she*

> *was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.*

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> *A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:*
>
> > *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*
>
> *She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.*


THE STORY OF KEITH RANSOM-KEHLER
FORGET-ME-NOT, IRAN
SARAH MUNRO

Comments

February 14. On this date in 2005, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article about Mongolia noting "In classes like this, children learn songs, stories, and quotations that teach them spiritual and moral values...part of a curriculum developed by the Ruhi Institute..."

Original file: 0123.html (position #84)

February 14. On this date in 2005, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article about Mongolia noting "In classes like this, children learn songs, stories, and quotations that teach them spiritual and moral values...part of a curriculum developed by the Ruhi Institute..."

> *Brilliant stars of Mongolia*
>
> *In classes like this, children learn songs, stories, and quotations that teach them spiritual and moral values.*

The classes are part of a curriculum developed by the Ruhi Institute, a Baha'i educational institution in Colombia, that also acquaints the pupils with the history and principles of the Baha'i Faith.

Children's class teacher Uyangantsengel Dashtend (rear left), a designer by profession, holds classes for two groups of children three times a week.

"Children are our future," Ms. Dashtend said. "If we work with them, we will be guaranteeing the world we wish to help to build."

Baha'is hold about 85 children's classes throughout Mongolia. The Baha'i community also organizes regular study circles and prayer gatherings, which are open to Baha'is and the wider public.

Comments

February 14. On this date in 1972, with one year left in the Nine Year Plan of the Third Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era, the NSA of the U.S. addressed a letter "urging American Bahá'ís, one and all, newly enrolled and believers of long standing, to arise, put their reliance in ....

Original file: 0122.html (position #83)

February 14. On this date in 1972, with one year left in the Nine Year Plan of the Third Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States addressed a letter "urging American Bahá'ís, one and all, newly enrolled and believers of long standing, to arise, put their reliance in Bahá'u'lláh and armed with that supreme power, continue unabated their efforts to reach the waiting souls."

National Spiritual Assembly of the

Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We were delighted with the information contained in your semiannual statistical report. The believers in the United States are to be applauded for opening, during the past six-month period, 642 localities to the Faith and enrolling 3,053 believers.

We note that the new teaching methods you have developed, in reaching the waiting masses, have substantially influenced the winning of your goals, and ***we urge the American Bahá'ís, one and all, newly enrolled and believers of long standing, to arise, put their reliance in Bahá'u'lláh and armed with that supreme power, continue unabated their efforts to reach the waiting souls,*** *while simultaneously consolidating the hard-won victories. New methods inevitably bring with them criticism and challenges no matter how successful they may ultimately prove to be. The influx of so many new believers is, in itself, a call to the veteran believers to join the ranks of those in this field of service and to give wholeheartedly of their knowledge and experience. Far from standing aloof,* ***the American believers are called upon now, as never before, to grasp this golden opportunity which has been presented to them, to consult together prayerfully and widen the scope of their endeavors.***

Efforts to reach the minorities should be increased and broadened to include all minority groups such as the Indians, Spanish-speaking people, Japanese and Chinese. Indeed, every stratum of American society must be reached and can be reached with the healing Message, if the believers will but arise and go forth with the spirit which is conquering the citadels of the southern states. Such a program, coupled as it must be with continuous consolidation, can be effectively carried out by universal participation on the part of every lover of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your goals are well-nigh won and you have only to form one Local Assembly in Bermuda and one in the Falkland Islands. You must pursue your efforts to translate and publish literature in Kazakh and enrich literature for the Indians. The palm of victory is within your reach.

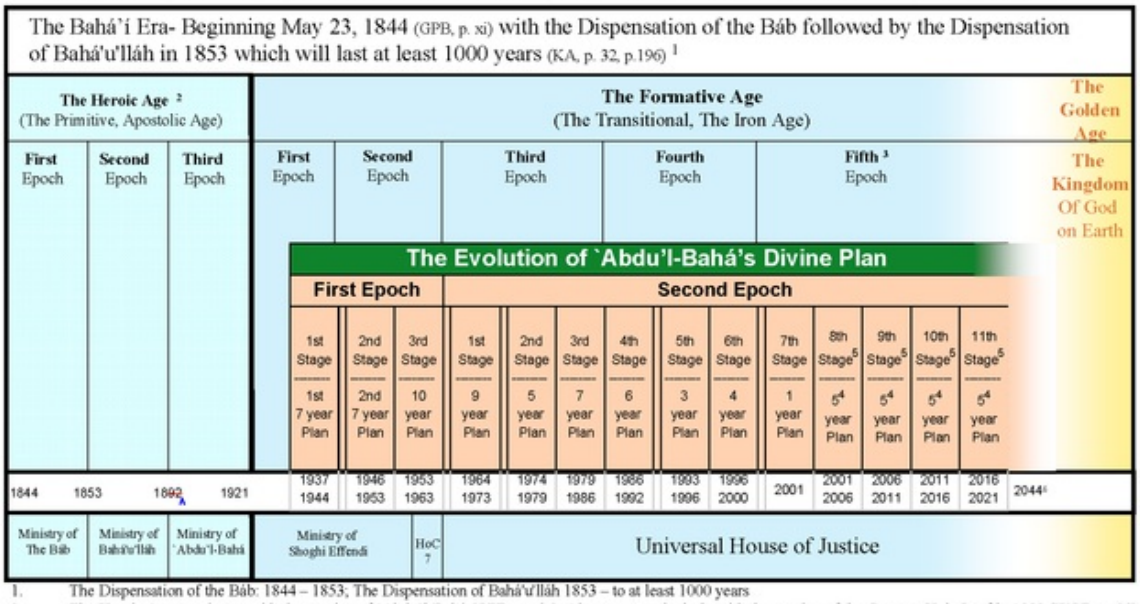
We shall continue to pray fervently at the Holy Shrines for the self-sacrificing labors of the beloved friends in the United States.

> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice*

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102


The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2
(The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
The Formative Age
(The Transitional, The Iron Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Golden Age
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage 5 4 year Plan
9th Stage 5 4 year Plan
10th Stage 5 4 year Plan
11th Stage 5 4 year Plan
1844 1853 1892 1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice

1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

February 15. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Western States." which is the 12th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

Original file: 0121.html (position #82)

February 15. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Western States*, which is the 12th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of Abbúd in Acre, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the eleven Western States of the United States: New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> *He is God!*
>
> *O ye friends and the maidservants of the Merciful, the chosen ones of the Kingdom:*

THE BLESSED state of California bears the utmost similarity to the Holy Land, that is, the country of Palestine. *The air is of the utmost temperance, the plain very spacious, and the fruits of Palestine are seen in that state in the utmost of freshness and delicacy.* ***When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was traveling and journeying through those states, he found himself in Palestine, for from every standpoint there was a perfect likeness between this region and that state. Even the shores of the Pacific Ocean, in some instances, show perfect resemblance to the shores of the Holy Land—even the flora of the Holy Land have grown on those shores —the study of which had led to much speculation and wonder.***

Likewise, in the state of California and other Western states, wonderful scenes of the world of nature, which bewilder the minds of men, are manifest. Lofty mountains, deep canyons, great and majestic waterfalls, and giant trees are witnessed on all sides, while its soil is in the utmost fertility and richness. ***That blessed state is similar to the Holy Land and that region and that country like unto a delectable paradise, is in many ways identical with Palestine. Now just as there are natural resemblances, heavenly resemblances must also be acquired.***

The lights of the divine traces are manifest in Palestine. *The majority of the Israelitish Prophets raised the call of the Kingdom of God in this holy ground. Having spread the spiritual teachings, the nostrils of the spiritually-minded ones became fragrant, the eyes of the illumined souls became brightened, the ears were thrilled through this song, the hearts obtained eternal life from the soul-refreshing breeze of the Kingdom of God and gained supreme illumination from the splendor of the Sun of Reality. Then from this region the light was spread to Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia.*

Now California and the other Western States must earn an ideal similarity with the Holy Land*, and from that state and that region the breaths of the Holy Spirit be diffused to all parts of America and Europe, that the call of the Kingdom of God may exhilarate and rejoice all the ears, the divine principles bestow a new life, the different parties may become one party, the divergent ideas may disappear and revolve around one unique center, the East and the West of America may embrace each other, the anthem of the oneness of the world of humanity may confer a new life upon all the children of men, and the tabernacle of universal peace be pitched on the apex of America; thus Europe and*

Africa may become vivified with the breaths of the Holy Spirit, this world may become another world, the body politic may attain to a new exhilaration, and just as in the state of California and other Western States the marvelous scenes of the world of nature are evident and manifest, the great signs of the Kingdom of God may also be unveiled so that the body may correspond with the spirit, the outward world may become a symbol of the inward world, and the mirror of the earth may become the mirror of the Kingdom, reflecting the ideal virtues of heaven.

During My journey and traveling in those parts, I beheld wonderful scenes and beautiful panoramas of nature, orchards and rivers; national parks and general conclaves; deserts, plains, meadows and prairies; and the grains and fruits of that region greatly attracted My attention; even to the present moment they are in My mind.

Particularly was I greatly pleased with the meetings in San Francisco and Oakland, the gatherings in Los Angeles, and the believers who came from the cities of other states. ***Whenever their faces cross My memory, immediately infinite happiness is realized.***

Therefore I hope that the divine teachings like unto the rays of the sun may be diffused in all the Western States, and the blessed verse of the Qur'án, "It is a good City and the Lord is the Forgiver!" 1 may become realized. Likewise, the significance of another Qur'anic verse, "Do ye not travel through the land?" 2 and of the verse, "Behold the traces of the Mercy of God!" 3 become revealed in the utmost effulgence.

Praise be to God that through the divine bounty and providence, in that region the field of service is vast, the minds are in the utmost degree of intelligence and progress, sciences and arts are being promoted, the hearts like unto mirrors are in the utmost state of purity and translucency, and the friends of God are in perfect attraction. Therefore it is hoped that meetings for teaching will be organized and instituted, and for the diffusion of the fragrances of God wise teachers may be sent to cities, even to villages.

The teachers of the Cause must be heavenly, lordly and radiant. They must be embodied spirit, personified intellect, and arise in service with the utmost firmness, steadfastness and self-sacrifice. In their journeys they must not be attached to food and clothing. They must concentrate their thoughts on the outpourings of the Kingdom of God and beg for

the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. With a divine power, with an attraction of consciousness, with heavenly glad tidings and celestial holiness they must perfume the nostrils with the fragrances of the Paradise of Abhá.

The following commune is to be read by them every day:

> *O GOD! O God! This is a broken-winged bird and his flight is very slow—assist him so that he may fly toward the apex of prosperity and salvation, wing his way with the utmost joy and happiness throughout the illimitable space, raise his melody in Thy Supreme Name in all the regions, exhilarate the ears with this call, and brighten the eyes by beholding the signs of guidance.*
>
> *O Lord! I am single, alone and lowly. For me there is no support save Thee, no helper except Thee and no sustainer beside Thee. Confirm me in Thy service, assist me with the cohorts of Thine angels, make me victorious in the promotion of Thy Word and suffer me to speak out Thy wisdom amongst Thy creatures. Verily, Thou art the helper of the weak and the defender of the little ones, and verily Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty and the Unconstrained.*

1. *Qur'án 34:15.*
2. *Qur'án 30:9, 40:82, 47:10.*
3. *Qur'án 30:50.*

Comments

February 15. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "he would like in the European languages to have as much uniformity with the English translations as possible." Bahá'í works are translated into the world's languages from English versions, not the original Arabic or Persian.

Original file: 0120.html (position #81)

February 15. On this date in 1957, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís addressed the capitalization of pronouns referring to God, noting that "he would like in the European languages to have as much uniformity with the English translations as possible." Bahá'í works, such as the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, are translated into the world's languages from English versions, not the original Arabic or Persian.

> *365. Capitalizing Pronouns in Other Languages*
>
> *"He is interested in accomplishing two things--he would like in the European languages to have as much uniformity with the English translations as possible; he does not wish the Bahá'í translations to be in any way a flagrant violation of the rules of the language into which our literature is being translated.*
>
> *"Your Committee must conscientiously study this question, and then do the best you can to have the Bahá'í literature in French meet the high standards of the French language and grammar.*
>
> *"If the possessive and demonstrative adjectives and pronouns in French are never capitalized where they stand for 'God', then this should not be done in the Bahá'í literature. If there is a precedent for doing so in the French language, however, they should be. The same is true of the attributes of God."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Translation and Publication Committee of France, February 15, 1957)*

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February

15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

Comments

February 15. On this date in 1782, William Miller was born. He predicted that Christ would return to the Earth. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

Original file: 0119.html (position #80)

February 15. On this date in 1782, William Miller, a Baptist preacher, was born. He predicted that on March 21, 1844, Christ would return to the Earth. When this did not come to pass, he recalculated the date to October 22, 1844. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this Christian prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

William Miller, a Baptist preacher, predicted that on March 21, 1844, Christ would return

to the Earth. When this did not come to pass, he recalculated the date to October 22, 1844. Although the prophecy was not fulfilled, leading to what was called the Great Disappointment, the Millerites would go on to form the various Adventist churches.

Thief in the Night argues that Miller's interpretation of biblical prophecies for the signs and dates of the coming of Jesus were correct and fulfilled by the Báb who declared that he was the "Promised One" on May 23, 1844, and began openly teaching in Iran in October 1844.

Written by Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, a popular radio and television personality, *Thief in the Night* has been reprinted over twenty times by George Ronald Publisher, an official publishing house of the Bahá'ís Administrative Order. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

What is interesting about these events in general is the manner in which individuals react. In the classic work of social psychology, *When Prophecy Fails,* Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter studied a small UFO religion in Chicago called the Seekers that believed in an imminent apocalypse. They describe the coping mechanisms after the event did not occur, and their findings have been generally applicable to a wide variety of scenarios involving cognitive dissonance and true-believer syndrome.

Festinger describes the basic hypotheses of cognitive dissonance as follows (page 3):

1. The existence of dissonance [or inconsistency], being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance [or consistency].

2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.

Festinger and his co-authors conclude that the following conditions lead to increased conviction in beliefs following disconfirmation (page 4):

1. The belief must be held with deep conviction and be relevant to the believer's actions or behavior.

2. The belief must have produced actions that are difficult to undo.

3. The belief must be sufficiently specific and concerned with the real world such that it can be clearly disconfirmed.

4. The disconfirmatory evidence must be recognized by the believer.

5. The believer must have social support from other believers.

Festinger describes the increased conviction and proselytizing by cult members after disconfirmation as a specific instantiation of cognitive dissonance (i.e., increased proselyting reduced dissonance by producing the knowledge that others also accepted their beliefs) and its application to understanding complex mass phenomena. (pages 252-259)

When Prophecy Fails was published in 1957, the year that Shoghi Effendi died without having written a will as prescribed in Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Aqdas and without having designated a successor Guardian as stipulated in `Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.

From the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 109 "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will. The testator should head this document with the adornment of the Most Great Name, bear witness therein unto the oneness of God in the Dayspring of His Revelation, and make mention, as he may wish, of that which is praiseworthy, so that it may be a testimony for him in the kingdoms of Revelation and Creation and a treasure with his Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Faithful."

From The Will And Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Part One, page 12 "O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—“The child is the secret essence of its sire,” that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him."

Comments

February 15. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi noted the Haziratu'l-Quds "is an administrative headquarters. No doubt in the future it will be used for purely administrative purposes, but for the time being it must fill the role of being a true Centre and rallying-point for the Bahá'í Community.

Original file: 0118.html (position #79)

February 15. On this date in 1947, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of South America noted that the Haziratu'l-Quds "is an administrative headquarters. No doubt in the future it will be used for purely administrative purposes, but for the time being it must fill the role of being a true Centre and rallying-point for the Bahá'í Community."

913. Dancing Not Appropriate in Haziratu'l-Quds

"The beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer the questions raised in your recent letter regarding the proper use of the Haziratu'l-Quds.

"As in most cases the Bahá'ís have no other meeting-place in the city which has a Haziratu'l-Quds, and the Haziratu'l-Quds is a building that has a number of rooms, he sees no objection in allowing the youth to have their meetings there with their non-Bahá'í friends, but dancing he does not feel is appropriate. Bahá'í weddings and funerals can likewise be conducted in the Haziratu'l-Quds.

"The Haziratu'l-Quds, although Feasts and Holy Days are celebrated in it, must not be confounded with a Temple; it is an administrative headquarters. No doubt in the future it will be used for purely administrative purposes, but for the time being it must fill the role of being a true Centre and rallying-point for the Bahá'í Community."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of South America, February 15, 1947)

Comments

February 15. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi responded to questions concerning the historical accuracy of statements by Bahá’u’lláh and 'Abdu’l-Bahá', admitting that "We have no historical proof of the truth of the Master's statement regarding the Greek philosophers visiting the Holy Land."

Original file: 0117.html (position #78)

February 15. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter (also referenced here and here) to a British Bahá'í, in reference to questions raised concerning the historical accuracy of statements by Bahá’u’lláh and 'Abdu’l-Bahá', such as a specific passage in the *Lawḥ-i-Ḥikmat* regarding Empedocles and Pythagoras being contemporaries of David and Solomon, admitting that "We have no historical proof of the truth of the Master's statement regarding the Greek philosophers visiting the Holy Land."

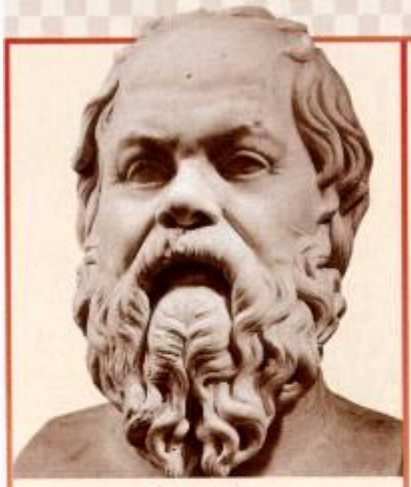
15 February 1947

Philosophy, as you will study it and later teach it, is certainly not one of the sciences that begins and ends in words. Fruitless excursions into metaphysical hair-splitting is meant, not a sound branch of learning like philosophy.

***We have no historical proof of the truth of the Master's statement regarding the Greek philosophers visiting the Holy Land**, etc. but such proof may come to light through research in the future.*

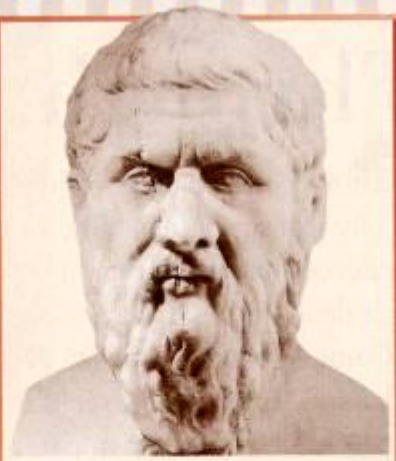
As regards your own studies: he would advise you not to devote too much of your time to the abstract side of philosophy, but rather to approach it from a more historical angle. As to correlating philosophy with the Bahá'í teachings; this is a tremendous work which scholars in the future can undertake. We must remember that not only are all the teachings not yet translated into English, but they are not even all collected yet. Many important Tablets may still come to light which are at present owned privately.

HISTORY MAKERS



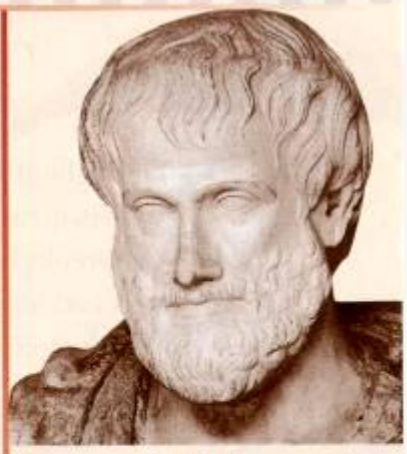
Socrates
469–399 B.C.

Socrates was one of the most powerful thinkers in history. He encouraged his students to examine their beliefs. Socrates asked them a series of leading questions to show that people hold many contradictory opinions. This method of teaching by a question-and-answer approach is known as the *Socratic method.* He devoted his life to gaining self-knowledge and once wrote, "There is only one good, knowledge; and one evil, ignorance."



Plato
427–347 B.C.

Born into a wealthy Athenian family, Plato had careers as a wrestler and a poet before he became a philosopher. He studied with Socrates. After his teacher died in 399 B.C., Plato left Greece and traveled to North Africa and Italy. He later returned to Athens and founded a school called The Academy in 387 B.C. The school lasted for approximately 900 years. It was Plato who once stated, "Philosophy begins in wonder."



Aristotle
384–322 B.C.

Aristotle, the son of a physician, was one of the brightest students at Plato's academy. He came there as a young man and stayed for 20 years until Plato's death. In 335 B.C., Aristotle opened his own school in Athens called the Lyceum. The school eventually rivaled the Academy. Aristotle once argued, "He who studies how things originated and came into being . . . will achieve the clearest view of them."

Comments

February 15. On this date in 2017, Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs published "A Discussion with Joy Mboya, Executive Director of the Godown Arts Centre." Joy Mboya is from a prominent Kenyan Bahá'í family, as well as a leader in the field of the arts.

Original file: 0116.html (position #77)

February 15. On this date in 2017, Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs published "A Discussion with Joy Mboya, Executive Director of the Godown Arts Centre." Joy Mboya, a member of the NSA of Kenya, is from a prominent Kenyan Bahá'í family (daughter of early converts including NSA member Catherine Mboya and brother of musician Andrew Mboya) The interviewer asks about a published population "figure of 450,000, which seems rather high," receiving the reply "During the early 1960s and 1970s, the numbers might indeed have been that high...At present our

data shows the community numbers to be between 25,000 and 30,000 people. Those are mostly adults, as children are not yet fully captured in the statistics. A total for the community, including children, may be around 40,000..."

Joy Mboya

https://hivisasa.com/posts/64860255-raila-meets-joy-mboya-at-capitol-hill-office

https://www.president.go.ke/2017/11/12/first-lady-joins-bahai-faithful-as-they-mark-the-bicentenary-celebration-of-the-birth-of-prophet-bahaullah/

Andrew Mboya

http://www.treasuresofwonderment.com/featured-artist/andrew-mboya

We are pleased to introduce Andrew mboya as a new Featured Artist on Treasures of Wonderment. Andrew was born December, 1962 in Nairobi, Kenya and has a spent most of his youth surviving with a variety of jobs including a police apprentice motor mechanic, and a freelance mechanic and a small truck driver,both in Britain and Kenya but his dream has always been to be a musician He is self taught on the guitar and his idols are Simon and Garfunkel and the Beatles who have influenced the style of guitar he plays today. He has served at the Baha'i World Center, Haifa, Israel for three years and in November of 2000 he moved to the United Statres to further his studies in aviation and graduated in May of 2005 with two diplomas in aviation studies and received an Associates Degree in applied science. With his studies behind him, he is now able to focus entirely on his music and is preparing to offer a CD of Baha'i prayers set to music.

Contact: Andrew Mboya Atlanta, Georgia mboya75@yahoo.com

A Discussion with Joy Mboya, Executive Director of the Godown Arts Centre

With: Joy Mboya Berkley Center Profile

February 15, 2017

Background: Joy Mboya is a member of Kenya's active Baha'i community, as well as a leader in the field of the arts. She spoke by Skype with Katherine Marshall on February 15, 2017, to explore the work of Kenya's Baha'i community related to development and peacebuilding. The discussion focused on the community's history and current focus, returning always to the core principles and values that guide the Baha'i tradition. Areas of particular focus in Kenya include peacebuilding (which has included inputs to mediate in

conflicts: for example, participation in discussions led by the National Cohesion Committee following the post election violence of 2008), environmental protection (for example, tree planting by youth), education (both spiritual formation and support to basic public education), action to advance gender equality, and interreligious action.

Are you indeed the Joy Mboya who is involved so many arts activities in Kenya?

Yes. I work here at the the Godown Arts Centre. I have been here since it started, as a co-founder. I originally trained and practiced as an architect, but have moved into the broader field of the arts.

And what is your role in the Baha'i community?

I have had, especially recently, the opportunity to serve the Baha'i community in different positions. That includes my current coordination of the External Affairs Office of the Kenya Bahai' community. This office is a quite new, formalized about two years ago. One of our activities is to consolidate information about community activities and to share it. We are also beginning to actively and intentionally participate in activities of mutual interest with other civil society organizations. Areas where we are particularly involved are peace, the environment, women, and interfaith platforms. These areas of focus have become clearer over the last decade, and still more intentional in the last two years.

How did you become a member of the Baha'i community?

My father was one of the first Baha'is in Kenya. Members of the Baha'i community, teachers, first came to Kenya at the beginning of the 1950s, and my father was among the first who joined. Thus the family was introduced to the faith.

Can you give me an idea of the size of the community in Kenya? I found one figure of 450,000, which seems rather high.

One of our current efforts is to keep up with and to clean up Kenya Baha'i community statistics. During the early 1960s and 1970s, the numbers might indeed have been that high—there were many who come into the faith, but sustaining and coordinating that growth was clearly a challenge. At present our data shows the community numbers to be between 25,000 and 30,000 people. Those are mostly adults, as children are not yet fully captured in the statistics. A total for the community, including children, may be around 40,000, which is similar to the numbers of the Hindu community in Kenya.

Historically the first Baha'i missionaries—properly referred to as teachers—came to

Nairobi, where some of them first settled. That is the community my father was part of. Then some teachers went west, to Kitale, Kakamega, Bungoma, and the largest communities today live in those areas. But Baha'is are spread across the country, and today they are present almost everywhere, including the coast, the Rift Valley, central and eastern regions, and with a small representation in the northeastern counties.

Are most Kenyan-born?

Yes. There are not many Baha'is among diaspora communities in Kenya. I would guess that close 99 percent of members are native-born Kenyans.

What are the main development programs that are led by the Baha'i community?

It is at the grassroots that most activities within the community happen. They include various social action activities, related to the environment, agricultural practices, education, community schools, health, etc. They arise from community needs. An example is an initiative on latrines that is related to cleanliness and the reduction of communicable diseases that was undertaken in the communities in Lugari and Namawanga in the western part of the country. The issues are raised within the entire community, not only among the Baha'is. There are various kinds of such activity where the numbers of Baha'is in a community are significant.

What does the Baha'i community do in the field of education?

Over last decade the approach of the Baha'i community globally has become more systematic about how to approach the teaching about the tenets of the faith. Education, across the globe, involves educating children, junior youth (who are 12 to 15 years old), and adults. This education is a spiritual foundation and is adapted to each age group. At the level of children, for example, it centers on virtues and spiritual principles, alongside aspects of reading and encouraging the capacity to articulate.

Education activities within some communities have moved farther along. In Kenya, two communities in Matunda Soy and Tiriki West have started community schools, initiated through the Baha'i community, but open to all of the community. Perhaps distinctive about these initiatives is their intention that the community gains ownership for the education of the children in the community as one means for the whole to prosper.

Members of the community, including those who are not Baha'is, arise to volunteer as teachers. They receive training, and the teacher stipends come from the general community. At present, the level of education that has begun is at kindergarten stage. It is

anticipated that the other years of learning will also eventually be incorporated, and interface with the government systems will be considered along the way. There are a few other schools—primary and secondary schools—that are government-run but "sponsored" by the Baha'i community. What this means practically is that Baha'i pastoral guidance is offered. In some instances, material support to the school (such as chairs) has been provided as well.

What is the focus of the community's work on peace? Some describe Kenya today as a powder keg. How is the community responding to some of Kenya's specific tensions?

Most of the community's peacebuilding work comes directly from the experience of members of the Baha'i community; in other words, communities respond to the issues in their context. One activity involves messages to leaders on the theme of peace. At a more practical level, religious communities (not only the Baha'i) inevitably become involved when specific conflicts arise. The Baha'i community works with other communities on conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue. For example, in 2008 the Baha'i faith participated in the consultations of the Kenya National Cohesion following election violence. We work to develop understandings that can translate beyond the faith community.

For a long time now, the Baha'i community has engaged in interfaith spaces. Last year specifically, the External Affairs office had lengthy engagement with a local interreligious dialogue network that included Christians, Hindus, and Muslims. We visit each other's spaces of worship and gatherings and talk about our responsibilities as a community of faith. Out of that engagement, a manual was developed, a kind of handbook on how to mediate conflict in situations where there is diversity and sharp divergence of views.

What about issues of violence?

The community engages with other like-minded civil society organizations. After the 2007-20088 post-election violence, that was an issue that consumed the country, and the Baha'i joined their voice with other communities. At a more local level the community also provided safe spaces, for dialogue but also sometimes a physical safe space. We engaged in dialogue with the different institutions responsible for addressing the issues.

But at a more fundamental level, the community's approach comes from our deep commitment to equality.

The Baha'i tradition is well-known for its commitment to women's equality. How is that manifested in Kenya? What do you see as the main issues?

Absolutely, there are plenty of issues! The Baha'i community tries first and foremost to set an example. We try to model equality of genders in the roles that each gender plays in the life of the community and the family. When people see the example of the roles that women play in community leadership and in the Baha'i local assemblies that has an impact. Women participate in many types of spaces: as teachers, in classroom, and as a voice within the family, a voice that is listened to. We have long been strong advocates of education of girls: the community works actively to promote this.

And how does the community approach the issues of environment?

That is an area of activity that the Baha'i community has been engaged in for a long time. It is a topic that especially engages youth, who tend to take up the issue within their communities. Youth groups, for example, work together on tree planting or on an action of reforestation. Baha'i youth join other civil society groups in such efforts. Tree planting is often a component of Baha'i summer school programs, as well as part of the service activities of junior youth groups.

We have recently become more and more systematic and intentional at the village and grassroots level. Young people are coming to understand that the issues are not just for their village or community but for the nation, and that specific issues like water or tree cover are linked to agriculture and the wider environment. This understanding is especially marked in more advanced and larger Baha'i communities, say with 3,000 or more people.

What about the issue of corruption, that some describe as a “make or break” issue for Kenya. Is the Baha'i community directly involved in the fight against corruption?

Not directly, at least to date. With the formation of the External Affairs office, however, we are working to identify themes and issues prevalent in the context here and consider how to bring a Baha'i perspective into these discourses. We are discussing which ones we might take on and how we might approach them. Corruption is obviously a huge issue. It is one where we are likely to enter it through the interfaith space. In a similar way we want to work to strengthen women’s rights and roles in the society.

What about involvement in elections? There is discussion about how religious bodies will engage in the 2017 elections that are approaching.

The Baha'i community is conscious of its commitment to be completely apolitical, and not to be or appear to be partisan; still, each individual is aware of their responsibilities as a citizen. That is something where we are very careful. We focus on the specific qualities of candidates who are seeking office but not on their party affiliations. And we are also

prepared now (as we were in 2013) for what might happen, and to participate in the role of a mediator. One way that members of the Baha'i community did this following post-election violence in 2008 was to visit the camps for displaced people and to offer assistance with clothes and foodstuffs irrespective of the ethnic identities of the displaced. It is a fundamental principle not to discriminate, and communities will be thinking about that.

You are very involved in the arts. Do you see connections between your day work in the arts and the activities of the Baha'i community for which you have responsibility?

Indeed, there are many connections. At one level, art is one way of communication, and Baha'is are encouraged to use these methods. That includes song, dance, plays, and so on. The arts can advance the themes of peace and equality.

A central feature of the Baha'i approach is that it is very participatory and very community oriented. We celebrate diversity. I certainly try to apply inclusive processes in my own practice and work activities. And there are few better ways to do that than through the arts, especially when there is community participation.

On national social and economic development strategies, does the Baha'i community express views in any formal way? At the UN level, the community is especially active and informed. What about in Kenya?

While there is no formal mechanism at the grassroots level, at present, in a number of communities there is an organic and natural engagement in social issues and discourses of the society. A more formalized approach is apparent at the level of institutions. For example, the External Affairs office of the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya takes more strategic actions. The External Affairs personnel will enter selected spaces to express and share Baha'i views.

We are very much involved from different angles, and we make an input whenever we can. It is part of the deeper story of how the community approaches its role. There are counsellors of faith, who are responsible for supporting and guiding work at a very grassroots level. The local and national assemblies of the community take up the issues and they support the propagation of community-based activities. These efforts move across all the Baha'i communities, helping to keep a finger on the pulse of community. That allows us to pick up the ball when needed and to have firsthand knowledge.

While Kenya is a very religious country, there is not much explicit recognition in formal development policy documents.

That is a bit strange. In many ways the formal documents do not reflect well the realities of Kenyan society. But, when the society and nation face important issues, the religious voices do come out strongly.

What about at the local level, with the 2010 devolution?

Community members are sometimes part of committees at the county government level, especially in the western parts of Kenya. There is an effort to offer a rational voice and worldview. At the national level, 2007-2008, some members were represented on the National Cohesion Committee.

What about refugee issues? Is the community involved either in the management of camps or in advocacy?

Not really. There are some Baha'is in the refugee camps, and we work to assist them, but the numbers are very small. We take strategic positions when required.

To end, your path is fascinating. How did you come to the work you are doing now?

I was born and grew up in Nairobi and attended Kilimani Primary and Alliance Girls' High School. I had many dreams, often changing, including being a doctor, president, and engineer, but a constant was my love for sciences and music. I was the fourth born in a family of seven, and, because there was no pressure to be or act in a certain way, it was easier to define myself. After high school, I went to Princeton University to pursue a degree in architecture between 1980 and 1985. I returned to Kenya and worked for an architectural firm but tried many other things, including photography. I joined a music group, Musikly Speaking. So I was an architect during the day and a musician and thespian in the evenings, a band member songwriter, and I enjoyed every moment. We used music as a tool for social change, getting involved in advocacy for different social issues affecting the community. We were able to show that the arts were a bankable career choice that Kenyan women could engage in.

In 1993 I went to Australia to study music at the post-graduate level. I had a chance there to teach actors, which I enjoyed very much. I then returned home, hoping to make a change for Kenya's many talented people. In 2000, together with a group of other artists, we began a journey to create a multi-disciplinary space, and in 2003, the Performing & Visual Arts Centre Ltd, of the GoDown Arts Centre, was born. It is a non-profit facility that provides subsidized space for Kenyan artistes and public programs for local audiences. We've hosted regional East African Arts Summits (every two years) where we discuss topical issues and network. Recurrent challenges include limited resources, including lack of

financial support for programs, and attracting professional managers, administrators, and marketers. We have recently turned our focus to improving the skills of artists, especially the business aspect, under the concept of cultural industries and the creative economy. We are also getting more involved in infrastructural issues and interventions, and collaborated with the Kenya Polytechnic College (now the Technical University of Kenya) and the British Council to develop a curriculum for the creative entrepreneur and other associated career options, such as arts management and marketing.

Comments

February 15. On this date in 1891, Edward Granville Brown gave a lecture at the South Place Institute in London, this being the first public lecture on the Bahá'í Faith in the West. He is best known to modern Bahá'ís for his description of his meeting with Bahá'u'lláh.

Original file: 0115.html (position #76)

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Comments

February 16. On this date in 1998, the UHJ wrote about Huqúqu’lláh stating "You have asked as to where and how the House of Justice reports on its uses of the funds received through payment of Huqúqu’lláh. The House of Justice does not issue an accounting of the current expenditure of these funds.

Original file: 0114.html (position #75)

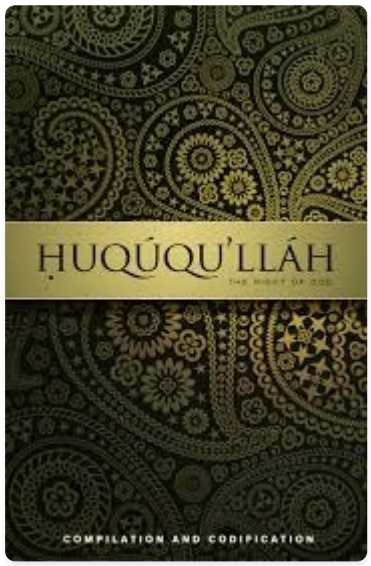
February 16. On this date in 1998, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual Bahá’í about Huqúqu’lláh stated "You have asked as to where and how the House of Justice reports on its uses of the funds received through payment of Huqúqu’lláh. The House of Justice does not issue an accounting of the current expenditure

of these funds."

> *111. "You have asked as to where and how the House of Justice reports on its..."* *You have asked as to where and how the House of Justice reports on its uses of the funds received through payment of Huqúqu'lláh.* ***The House of Justice does not issue an accounting of the current expenditure of these funds.*** *However, there is no secret as to the uses to which the funds are put. The Sacred Texts affirm that the Huqúqu'lláh is to be paid to the Authority in the Faith to whom all must turn, and indicate that these funds may be "expended for the relief of the poor, the disabled, the needy, and the orphans, and for other vital needs of the Cause of God". Decisions concerning such factors as the timing, the methods of disbursement and the amount rest with the House of Justice.*
>
> *In these days, as during the ministry of Shoghi Effendi, all funds received by the Head of the Faith are used to promote the interests of the Faith at the World Centre and worldwide. The Institution of Huqúqu'lláh Newsletter, issue no. 6, mentions that the funds are spent for such purposes as, "promotion of the teaching and proclamation of the Faith worldwide; care, maintenance and restoration of Bahá'í Holy Places; building up of the Bahá'í World Administrative Centre; support of the work of the many Bahá'í institutions and agencies; erection and restoration o f Bahá'í Houses of Worship; establishment and support of new institutions; charitable and benevolent undertakings; and support of the worldwide manifold interests of the Faith."*
>
> *The effective utilization of Huqúqu'lláh and other funds available to the House of Justice is manifest in the great developments taking place at the World Centre and throughout the Bahá'í world community, many of whose national budgets must be subsidized by the House of Justice, owing to the fact that the vast majority of the world's Bahá'ís are poor and cannot adequately support their national funds....*
>
> *The Huqúqu'lláh, as its name "The Right of God" implies, has a special character which distinguishes it from all other Bahá'í funds. Its nature and purpose, and the blessings with which payment of it has been endowed can be read in the compilation which has been issued on the subject....*
>
> *In accordance with Bahá'í principle, contributions to the various Bahá'í funds, as well as payments of the Right of God, are offered confidentially and are receipted.... You may rest assured that at the Bahá'í World Centre a method of*

> *financial management has been instituted to keep scrupulous accounts and also to prevent any significant incidence of extravagance or, God forbid, malfeasance from occurring undetected and unchecked. It is a method that maintains both the confidentiality of individual contributions and the integrity of the use of all funds entrusted to the House of Justice.*
>
> *(16 February 1998, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)*

This sort of lack of transparency and accountability inevitably leads to financial scandal, as happened in the Bahá'í community in Italy in 2007, when Franco Ceccherini, the General Secretary of the NSA, was arrested for embezzlement after an investigation by Italian tax authorities.



Comments

February 16. On this date in 1899 Hermann Grossmann, later a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Rosario, Argentina to a German family. When he was ten years old his family returned to Germany, and Grossmann would become an enthusiastic Bahá'í after serving in the German army in World War I.

Original file: 0113.html (position #74)

February 16. On this date in 1899 Hermann Grossmann, later a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Rosario, Argentina to a German family. When he was ten years old his family returned to Germany, and Grossmann would become an enthusiastic Bahá'í after serving in the German army in World War I, even during the years when the Bahá'í Faith was banned during Nazi rule. Shoghi Effendi appointed him a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951.

It is unclear whether Grossmann was the addressee of Shoghi Effendi's 1932 letter written

to a German Bahá'í wherein he stated about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í" and that "our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany, which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present."

> *11 February 1934*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Brother,*
>
> *I am charged by the Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 30th as well as for the enclosed pamphlet containing the address delivered by Herr Hitler on Oct. 14th, 1933, on the subject of Germany's attitude towards peace, all of which he read with deepest care and sustained interest. He wishes me to convey to you and to all the members of your German National Assembly and through them to all the followers of the Faith in Germany his views on the present conditions in that land, and particularly in their relation to the nature and scope of the Bahá'í activities of our German believers.*
>
> *At the outset it should be made indubitably clear that the Bahá'í Cause being essentially a religious movement of a spiritual character stands above every political party or group, and thus cannot and should not act in contravention to the principles, laws, and doctrines of any government.* ***Obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í .*** *Both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have urged us all to be submissive and loyal to the political authorities of our respective countries. It follows, therefore, that* ***our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country,***

specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present.

For whereas the friends should obey the government under which they live, even at the risk of sacrificing all their administrative affairs and interests, they should under no circumstances suffer their inner religious beliefs and convictions to be violated and transgressed by any authority whatever. ***A distinction of a fundamental importance must, therefore, be made between spiritual and administrative matters. Whereas the former are sacred and inviolable, and hence cannot be subject to compromise, the latter are secondary and can consequently be given up and even sacrificed for the sake of obedience to the laws and regulations of the government. Obedience to the state is so vital a principle of the Cause that should the authorities in Germany decide to-day to prevent the Bahá'ís from holding any meeting or publishing any literature they should obey and be as submissive as our Russian believers have thus far been under the Soviet regime. But, as already pointed out, such an allegiance is confined merely to administrative matters which if checked can only retard the progress of the Faith for some time. In matters of belief, however, no compromise whatever should be allowed, even though the outcome of it be death or expulsion***

There is one more point to be emphasized in this connection. The principle of obedience to government does not place any Bahá'í under the obligation of identifying the teachings of his Faith with the political program enforced by the government. For such an identification, besides being erroneous and contrary to both the spirit as well as the form of the Bahá'í message, would necessarily create a conflict within the conscience of every loyal believer.

For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe

but over a large part of mankind is, indeed, the very negation of the gospel of peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh The actual trend in the political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.

From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.

The Guardian hopes that these brief explanations will be sufficient to guide our German National Assembly in their efforts to safeguard and promote the interests of the Faith, and that through them they will be given a new vision of the Cause and a fresh determination to carry forward its message to the world at large.

With greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in Germany,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in loving appreciation of your strenuous, your intelligent and devoted efforts for the spread and consolidation of our beloved Faith. May the Almighty bless your endeavours, deepen your understanding of the essentials and requirements of our beloved Cause, and enable you in these difficult and challenging days to promote its interests and consolidate its institutions,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

February 17. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

Original file: 0112.html (position #73)

February 17. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

> *1388. Bahá'ís Requested to Withdraw from Masonic and Other Secret Societies*
>
> *"As regards your question about Masonry, the Bahá'ís, the Guardian feels very strongly, must learn at the present time to think internationally and not locally. Although each believer realizes that he is a member of one great spiritual family, a*

member of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he does not often carry this thought through to its logical conclusion: which is that if the Bahá'ís all over the world each belong to some different kind of society or church or political party, the unity of the Faith will be destroyed, because inevitably they will become involved in doctrines and policies that are in some way against our Teachings, and often against another group of people in another part of the world, or another race, or another religious block.

"Therefore, all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies in order to be entirely free to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a united body. Such groups as Masonry, however high the local standard may be, are in other countries gradually being influenced by the issues sundering the nations at present.

"The Guardian wants the Bahá'ís to disentangle themselves from anything that may in any way, now or in the future, compromise their independent status as Bahá'ís and the supra-national nature of their Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 17, 1956)

On February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good

influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a

Christian...

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, Bahá’í-Mohammedan.”

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*
>
> *Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: “Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, ‘Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.’ Now the same condition prevails.”*
>
> *This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, “What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?” let them answer: “We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu’l-Baha as the Centre of His*

> *Covenant."*

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*
>
> *"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.*
>
> *"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)*

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

> *1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like*
>
> *"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.*
>
> *"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."*

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

> *532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church*
>
> *"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization*

he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

Comments

February 17. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...the settlement of Persian Bahá'ís in Germany and Austria...where a large number of Persian Bahá'ís have settled, your Assembly should discuss the subject with them, and urge them to move to goal cities, where there are no Bahá'ís..."

Original file: 0111.html (position #72)

February 17. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi addressed a message to a "Bahá'í Sister" "concerning the settlement of Persian Bahá'ís in Germany and Austria...where a large number of Persian Bahá'ís have settled, your Assembly should discuss the subject with them, and urge them to move to goal cities, where there are no Bahá'ís..."

> *17 February 1957*

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

The Beloved Guardian has directed me to write to your Assembly, concerning the settlement of Persian Bahá'ís in Germany and Austria.

He has discussed the matter in some detail with ... when they were here, and asked them to review the matter with your Assembly.

It is artificial to build up communities or Assemblies with Persians, or for that matter, any Bahá'ís from other countries. The Communities and Assemblies should be made up of local people. Thus in any of the Centers where a large number of Persian Bahá'ís have settled, your Assembly should discuss the subject with them, and urge them to move to goal cities, where there are no Bahá'ís, or groups, in order to assist in the teaching work. Thus, the artificial Assemblies will necessarily have to be constituted of local Bahá'ís, and many new centers will be opened. Thus the Persian Bahá'ís will become pioneers and greatly aid the teaching work. At the same time, it will mean that the German Bahá'ís will have to redouble their efforts and win many converts to the Faith, in the cities from which the Persians move, and which are now artificial.

The Guardian hopes this action will stimulate the teaching work throughout Germany.

He sends you his loving greetings....

Comments

February 17. On this date in 1958, three months after the death of Shoghi Effendi, the Custodians addressed a letter to "the Hands of the Faith and the Members of the National Spiritual Assembly" of the U.S. expressing that they were "very distressed" at their use of the term "A New Bahá'í Era"

Original file: 0110.html (position #71)

February 17. On this date in 1958, three months after the death of Shoghi Effendi, the "Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land" addressed a letter to "To the Hands of the Faith and the Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States" expressing that they were "very distressed" at their use of the term "A New Bahá'í Era"

To the Hands of the Faith and the Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States February 17, 1958

Beloved Co-workers:

*The letter from the Hand of the Cause Horace Holley dated February 4th with copy of the statement you issued entitled **"A New Bahá'í Era"** was received, and after studying it very carefully we wish to share our views with you regarding it, and explain to you the reasons which prompted our recent cable requesting that certain points be deleted from it.*

We never received any copy whatsoever of this statement in Haifa and are most anxious to know if one was ever mailed to the Custodians? If it was sent to the Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas, he unfortunately had to go to a sanatorium in Switzerland to take care of his heart, which had not been in a good condition for some time and was becoming seriously impaired through work and strain after the passing of the beloved Guardian and the shock he received at that time.

*We heard of this statement of yours through excerpts forwarded here by some of the Hands of the Cause in Europe who were **very distressed** over the repercussions it might have, and indeed was already having, on the believers there.*

*Dear friends, the nine Hands of the Faith serving here at the World Centre have been **very distressed** that a statement of this magnitude, interpreting as it does the Proclamation made by the twenty-seven Hands of the Faith when they gathered in Bahji after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, who are according to his own words "the Chief Stewards of the embryonic World Commonwealth of Bahá'u'lláh" should have been issued without consultation with either the Custodians or the body of the Hands of the Cause who are dispersed all over the world.*

Please do not misunderstand us; we fully appreciate that your motive was to protect the Faith, that you must have been asked many questions which prompted this response, and that you acted after full consultation amongst yourselves. This does not change the fact that the only way the work of our beloved Guardian for which he was immolated for thirty-six years and which cost him his life in the end, can be protected, is by preserving the world character of the Cause of God, and this can obviously only be done from the International Centre of the Faith, the Centre which he said so many times was the heart or nerve centre, and the

permanent Spiritual and Administrative Centre.

If there is at this time of crisis a continental interpretation of events, and a continental answer to questions being raised by the believers, the dangers to the Cause of God are obviously immense. There are in our World Community eastern and western believers. Their backgrounds are different, their approach to a test of this nature different-the answer however must be uniform the world over; otherwise grave differences may arise and the marvellous accomplishment of our beloved Guardian in unifying this diversified Community be lost temporarily and its efficacy impaired.

We feel sure that you will see the wisdom of this, and that in future you will assist us, veteran and much-loved Community by our beloved Guardian that you are, to protect the work from the World Centre and to ensure its smooth functioning in all continents of the globe.

We have just cabled you, asking you, without making any undue fuss or attracting attention to the fact that you are doing so, to quietly divert attention, so to speak, from this statement which has been recently issued. If no further emphasis is given to it and the believers are encouraged to concentrate their full forces on making the forthcoming Intercontinental Conference in Chicago a tremendous success, which will be in itself a worthy American memorial to our dearly beloved Shoghi Effendi we feel that no serious harm will have been done.

The spirit of the believers all over the world is truly remarkable, and their faith, although in many cases having received a severe test, is unimpaired, and their devotion boundless. They must now be led, as you yourselves are wisely seeking to do, into the path of greater service, and the grief in their hearts converted into a dynamo of energy with which to carry on the teaching work and fulfil the Guardian's cherished plans.

We send you all our Bahá'í love, and ask you to remember us in your prayers as we remember you in ours.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

February 17. On this date in 1941, Hyde Dunn died in Sydney. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1952, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn were the first Bahá'ís in Australia and among the earliest Bahá'ís in New Zealand.

Original file: 0109.html (position #70)

February 17. On this date in 1941, Hyde Dunn died in Sydney. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1952, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn were the first Bahá'ís in Australia and among the earliest Bahá'ís in New Zealand.

In 1907 John Henry Hyde, then married to Fannie Dunn, met Clara in Walla Walla, Washington, when he and Nathan Ward Fitzgerald sought to place an advertisement for a

Bahá'í meeting they were holding in the medical office she was working at. She attended the meeting and later became a Bahá'í. John and Clara met again when attending a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá when he visited California in 1912, and the two would get married.

On April 10, 1919, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn disembarked from their ship in Sydney, opening Australia to the Bahá'í Faith.

Perhaps the most famous Australian Bahá'í is Cathy Freeman, an Aborigine who in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics had the honor of lighting the stadium's Olympic flame in the cauldron within a circle of fire. She also carried the Australian Flag and Aboriginal flag after winning the 400 meter race at the Sydney Olympic Games.

Cathy Freeman had her Bahá'í administrative rights suspended for political activism on behalf of Aboriginal Australians.

It is worth remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's views on native, indigenous people and cultures.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

> *Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.*
>
> *If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect.* ***The savage tribes of central***

Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has

been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. ***Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have***

been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

February 17. On this date in 2000, Mildred Mottahedeh died in New York City. She served as the first representative of the Bahá'í community at the United Nations, an Auxiliary Board member, and as an elected member of the International Bahá'í Council.

Original file: 0108.html (position #69)

February 17. On this date in 2000, Mildred Mottahedeh died in New York City. Having made a substantial fortune from her luxury porcelain business, she served as the first representative of the Bahá'í community at the United Nations, an Auxiliary Board member, and as an elected member of the International Bahá'í Council. Her son, Roy Mottahedeh, is a professor at Harvard University.

On June 15, 1997, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel featured an article about Mildred Root Mottahedeh.

The article notes...

For the last five years, she has served as a consultant to Mottahedeh & Co., having sold it to fellow Baha'is Grant and Wendy Kvalheim.

Now, she's retiring in order to focus full-time on the Mottahedeh Foundation, which has founded and sponsored projects in Uganda, Zaire, India and Micronesia.

Founded in 1958, the foundation is an extension of philanthropic work that she and her husband started in 1929, when they began their 49-year marriage. Living in an apartment in Greenwich Village, they were better off than many, she said.

"We felt so sorry for all the poor kids, all the starving people. We felt a sense of obligation."

Once a month, they rented a double-decker bus, filled it with children, drove to clothing and candy wholesalers,dressed and treated the kids, then took them to the Baha'i Center for a meal.

Baha'i was founded in the mid-19th century in Iran. Its main tenets are the unity of all religions and the unity of humankind.

Comments

February 18. On this date in 1912, "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "..the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times... Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan ... and still being thorough going Bahis."

Original file: 0107.html (position #68)

February 18. On this date in 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached

by a student of higher criticism who asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, Bahá’í-Mohammedan.”

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*
>
> *Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: “Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, ‘Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.’ Now the same condition prevails.”*
>
> *This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, “What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?” let them answer: “We regard Him as the foremost*

> *teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."*

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*
>
> *"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.*
>
> *"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)*

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

> *1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like*
>
> *"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.*
>
> *"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."*

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

> *532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church*

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

On March 26, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer told him how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order

> *"As regards your question about the Masonic Order, he considers that the honest and courageous thing for you to do is to inform your Lodge that you no longer consider yourself, for purely personal reasons, a Mason; and would like to have your name taken off their list. If they should press you for an explanation, which he imagines is unlikely, everybody being free to do as they please in this world, you can explain to them that in the present chaotic period the world is passing through, with so many streams and counterstreams of political thoughts and prejudices of all kinds, racial, religious, etc., storming the minds of men, that you wish to disentangle yourself from all association with the past and to stand alone, free in your own ideas.*
>
> *"He does not think that such an explanation will prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 26, 1956)*

On February 17, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

> *1388. Bahá'ís Requested to Withdraw from Masonic and Other Secret Societies*
>
> *"As regards your question about Masonry, the Bahá'ís, the Guardian feels very strongly, must learn at the present time to think internationally and not locally. Although each believer realizes that he is a member of one great spiritual family, a member of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he does not often carry this thought through to its logical conclusion: which is that if the Bahá'ís all over the world each belong to some different kind of society or church or political party, the unity of the Faith will be destroyed, because inevitably they will become involved in doctrines and policies that are in some way against our Teachings, and often against another group of people in another part of the world, or another race, or another religious block.*
>
> *"Therefore, all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret*

Societies in order to be entirely free to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a united body. Such groups as Masonry, however high the local standard may be, are in other countries gradually being influenced by the issues sundering the nations at present.

"The Guardian wants the Bahá'ís to disentangle themselves from anything that may in any way, now or in the future, compromise their independent status as Bahá'ís and the supra-national nature of their Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 17, 1956)

Almost exactly a year earlier, on February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with

secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)

AFTER FORTY YEARS IN PRISON, BAHAI LEADER PLANS TO VISIT FOLLOWERS IN UNITED STATES

Abdul Baka, Apostle of Universal Brotherhood, Seeks to Reconcile Various Religious Sects

ABDUL BAHA'S MESSAGE TO EUROPE.

Comments

February 18. On this date in 2003, an Assembly wrote the UHJ about plans to join protests against the war in Iraq. The UHJ replied that while "purported to be a peace campaign, it is obvious that the occasion is motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil ..."

Original file: 0106.html (position #67)

February 18. On this date in 2003, an Assembly wrote the Universal House of Justice about plans to join protests against the war in Iraq. The Universal House of Justice replied that while "purported to be a peace campaign, it is obvious that the occasion is motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world. Not only would it be contrary to the Baha'i principle of non-involvement in politics for Baha'i institutions, or individual believers, to become associated with such activities, it would also be harmful to the interests of the Faith internationally..."

20 February 2003

The Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of ...

Dear Baha'i Friends,

The Universal House of Justice was concerned to learn from your email letter dated 18 February 2003 that your Assembly has decided to participate in activities aimed at protesting against the United States government's actions in Iraq and the Middle East.

While the activities you describe are to be carried out as elements of what is purported to be a peace campaign, it is obvious that the occasion is motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world. Not only would it be contrary to the Baha'i principle of non-involvement in politics for Baha'i institutions, or individual believers, to become associated with such activities, it would also be harmful to the interests of the Faith internationally. The point to bear in mind here is that this event is not intended to promote peace in general but is focused on a specific dispute among governments. You should, therefore, reverse your decision; and if it becomes necessary to give a reason for not participating in the event, you need simply to explain that the Baha'i community prefers not to join in public demonstrations involving controversial issues, as this would undermine its essential purpose of promoting unity in all aspects of human affairs.

With loving Baha'i greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: International Teaching Centre Board of Counsellors in Asia

In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq.

David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after

appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On August 11, 2003, *The Independent* carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

On July 17, 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter "to the Bahá'ís of the World" announcing "with utter shock and desolating grief that the Bahá'ís in Baghdad discovered on 26 June that the "most holy habitation" of Bahá'u'lláh had been razed almost to the ground to make way for the construction of a mosque," at the end of what the Universal Hose of Justice calls a "highly delicate situation in Iraq over the last tumultuous decade."

It is somewhat ironic, that in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq. David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On August 11, 2003, *The Independent* carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

Chronicle / Brant Ward

Comments

February 18. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Perhaps the greatest test Bahá'ís are ever subjected to is from each other; but for the sake of the Master they should be ever ready to overlook each other's mistakes, apologize for harsh words they have uttered, forgive and forget."

Original file: 0105.html (position #66)

February 18. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Perhaps the greatest test Bahá'ís are ever subjected to is from each other; but for the sake of the Master they should be ever ready to overlook each other's mistakes, apologize for harsh words they have uttered, forgive and forget."

> *2037. Bahá'ís Often Each Other's Greatest Test*

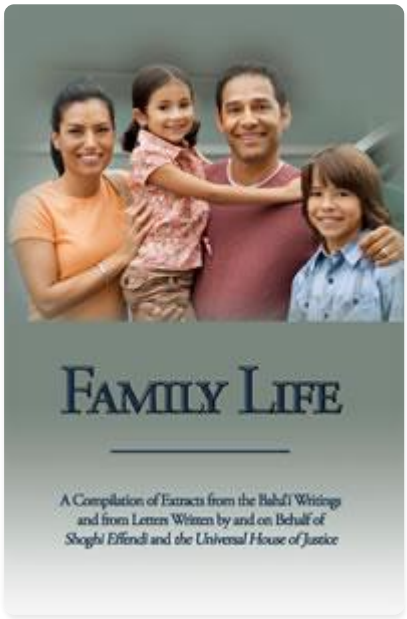
> *"Perhaps the greatest test Bahá'ís are ever subjected to is from each other; but for the sake of the Master they should be ever ready to overlook each other's mistakes, apologize for harsh words they have uttered, forgive and forget. He strongly recommends to you this course of action."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 18, 1945: Living the Life, p. 12)*

Comments

February 18. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice published a compilation titled "Family Life"

Original file: 0104.html (position #65)

February 18. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice published a compilation titled *Family Life*


FAMILY LIFE
A Compilation of Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings
and from Letters Written by and on Behalf of
Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice

Comments

February 18. On this date in 1970, the UHJ sent a letter to all NSAs announcing the Bahá'í International Community's attainment of consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, noting "devoted support Bahá'í communities throughout world finally rewarded."

Original file: 0103.html (position #64)

February 18. On this date in 1970, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies announcing the Bahá'í International Community's attainment of consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, noting "devoted support Bahá'í communities throughout world finally rewarded."

> *Attainment of Consultative Status with the*

United Nations Economic and Social Council

18 February 1970

To: All National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We share with you the text of a cable sent today to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States for publication in "Bahá'í News":

> *Joyfully announce Bahá'í world attainment consultative status* **United Nations Economic and Social Council** *thereby fulfilling long cherished hope beloved Guardian and World Center goal* **Nine Year Plan**. *Sustained persistent efforts more than twenty years accredited representatives* **Bahá'í International Community** *United Nations* ***devoted support Bahá'í communities throughout world finally rewarded.*** *Significant achievement adds prestige influence recognition ever advancing Faith Bahá'u'lláh. Offering prayers gratitude Holy Shrines.*
>
> *(Signed) Universal House of Justice.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice*

Comments

February 19. On this date in 1995, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice about a citation from Shoghi Effendi using the phrase "Bahá'í theocracy," inquiring about the development of a Bahá’í theocracy and the separation of Church and State.

Original file: 0102.html (position #63)

February 19. On this date in 1995, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice about a citation from Shoghi Effendi using the phrase "Bahá'í theocracy," inquiring about the development of a Bahá’í theocracy and the separation of Church and State.

The Universal House of Justice Department of the Secretariat

27 April 1995

[To an individual]

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

Your email of 19 February 1995 addressed to the Research Department was referred to the Universal House of Justice. In it you quote two phrases which appear in a book you

have recently read, and which seem from the context to be citations from Shoghi Effendi. These phrases are "Bahá'í theocracy" and "humanity will emerge from that immature civilization in which church and state are separate." You ask whether these references can be authenticated and dated. We have been instructed to send you the following reply.

A reference to "Bahá'í theocracy" is to be found in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual Bahá'í on 30 September 1949. This reads as follows:

He thinks your question is well put: what the Guardian was referring to was the theocratic systems, such as the Catholic Church and the Caliphate, which are not divinely given as systems, but man-made, and yet, being partly derived from the teachings of Christ and Muḥammad are in a sense theocracies. The Bahá'í theocracy, on the contrary, is both divinely ordained as a system and, of course, based on the teachings of the Prophet Himself.

The other passage does not comprise words of Shoghi Effendi, although its purport was approved by him. As you yourself have since discovered, it can be found in The Bahá'í World, volume VI, on page 199, in a statement entitled "Concerning Membership in Non-Bahá'í Religious Organizations," about which the Guardian's secretary had written on his behalf on 11 December 1935: "The Guardian has carefully read the copy of the statement you had recently prepared concerning nonmembership in non-Bahá'í religious organizations, and is pleased to realize that your comments and explanations are in full conformity with his views on the subject."

The complete paragraph in which the words appear is as follows:

In the light of these words, it seems fully evident that the way to approach this instruction is in realizing the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as an ever-growing organism destined to become something new and greater than any of the revealed religions of the past. Whereas former Faiths inspired hearts and illumined souls, they eventuated in formal religions with an ecclesiastical organization, creeds, rituals and churches, while the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, likewise renewing man's spiritual life, will gradually produce the institutions of an ordered society, fulfilling not merely the function of the churches of the past but also the function of the civil state. By this manifestation of the Divine Will in a higher degree than in former ages, humanity will emerge from that immature civilization in which church and state are separate and competitive institutions, and partake of a true civilization in which spiritual and social principles are at last reconciled as two aspects of one and the same Truth.

You also ask how these statements could be reconciled with Shoghi Effendi's comment on

page 149 of Bahá'í Administration, which appears to anticipate "a future that is sure to witness the formal and complete separation of Church and State," and with the following words in his letter of 21 March 1932 addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

A careful reading of the letter dated 6 December 1928 in which the Guardian's comment about the separation of Church and State occurs would suggest that, rather than enunciating a general principle, Shoghi Effendi is simply reviewing "the quickening forces of internal reform" that had "recently transpired throughout the Near and Middle East," and enumerating a number of factors that impinge on the development of the Faith in those parts of the world.

As for the statement made by Shoghi Effendi in his letter of 21 March 1932, the well-established principles of the Faith concerning the relationship of the Bahá'í institutions to those of the country in which the Bahá'ís reside make it unthinkable that they would ever purpose to violate a country's constitution or so to meddle in its political machinery as to attempt to take over the powers of government. This is an integral element of the Bahá'í principle of abstention from involvement in politics. However, this does not by any means imply that the country itself may not, by constitutional means, decide to adopt Bahá'í laws and practices and modify its constitution or method of government accordingly. The relationship between the principle of abstention from involvement in politics and the emergence of the Bahá'í State is commented on later in this letter. In the meantime we can quote the following extracts from letters written on behalf of the Guardian in response to queries from individual believers, which indicate that the relationship is an evolving one:

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.... Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve.

(30 November 1930)

The Bahá'ís will be called upon to assume the reins of government when they will come to constitute the majority of the population in a given country, and even then their participation in political affairs is bound to be limited in scope unless they obtain a similar majority in some other countries as well.

(19 November 1939)

The Bahá'ís must remain non-partisan in all political affairs. In the distant future, however, when the majority of a country have become Bahá'ís then it will lead to the establishment of a Bahá'í State.

(19 April 1941)

A proper understanding of all the above passages, and of their implications, requires an acceptance of two fundamental principles for the exegesis of Bahá'í Texts.

The first, which derives from the Covenant, is the principle that the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and intimately linked with the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. This principle is clearly expounded in two paragraphs from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer on 19 March 1946:

Whatever the Master has said is based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He was the perfect Interpreter, had lived with Him all His life; therefore what He says has the same standing, even if a text of Bahá'u'lláh is not available....

We must take the teachings as a great, balanced whole, not seek out and oppose to each other two strong statements that have different meanings; somewhere in between, there are links uniting the two. That is what makes our Faith so flexible and well balanced. For instance there are calamities for testing and for punishment—there are also accidents, plain cause and effect!

Bahá'u'lláh has given us a Revelation designed to raise mankind to heights never before attained. It is little wonder that the minds of individual believers, no matter how perceptive, have difficulty in comprehending its range. It is the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian which elucidate this vast Revelation and make clear the manner in which different statements relate to one another and what is implied by the Revealed Word. Without the bright light of the Covenant, this Faith, like all those before it, would be torn to pieces by the conflicting opinions of scholars applying limited human reasoning to divinely revealed truths.

The second fundamental principle which enables us to understand the pattern towards which Bahá'u'lláh wishes human society to evolve is the principle of organic growth which requires that detailed developments, and the understanding of detailed developments, become available only with the passage of time and with the help of the guidance given by that Central Authority in the Cause to whom all must turn. In this regard one can use the simile of a tree. If a farmer plants a tree, he cannot state at that moment what its exact height will be, the number of its branches or the exact time of its blossoming. He can, however, give a general impression of its size and pattern of growth and can state with confidence which fruit it will bear. The same is true of the evolution of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For example, we find the following illuminating explanation in a letter written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís in America on 23 February 1924:

And as we make an effort to demonstrate that love to the world may we also clear our minds of any lingering trace of unhappy misunderstandings that might obscure our clear conception of the exact purpose and methods of this new world order, so challenging and complex, yet so consummate and wise. We are called upon by our beloved Master in His Will and Testament not only to adopt it unreservedly, but to unveil its merit to all the world. To attempt to estimate its full value, and grasp its exact significance after so short a time since its inception would be premature and presumptuous on our part. We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications. But one word of warning must be uttered in this connection. Let us be on our guard lest we measure too strictly the Divine Plan with the standard of men. I am not prepared to state that it agrees in principle or in method with the prevailing notions now uppermost in men's minds, nor that it should conform with those imperfect, precarious, and expedient measures feverishly resorted to by agitated humanity. Are we to doubt that the ways of God are not necessarily the ways of man? Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, wholehearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? If we are to falter or hesitate, if our love for Him should fail to direct us and keep us within His path, if we desert Divine and emphatic principles, what hope can we any more cherish for healing the ills and sicknesses of this world?

Pending the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, whose function it is to lay more definitely the broad lines that must guide the future activities and administration of the Movement, it is clearly our duty to strive to obtain as clear a view as possible of the manner in which to conduct the affairs of the Cause, and then arise with single-mindedness

and determination to adopt and maintain it in all our activities and labors.

At this time we have the benefit of many subsequent interpretations by Shoghi Effendi and also the initial guidance of the Universal House of Justice, which will continue to elucidate aspects of this mighty system as it unfolds. In striving to attain a "clearer and fuller understanding" of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, we need to contemplate the operation of the Bahá'í principles of governance and social responsibility as they persist through changing sets of conditions, from the present time when the Bahá'í community constitutes a small number of people living in a variety of overwhelmingly non-Bahá'í societies, to the far different situation in future centuries when the Bahá'ís are becoming, and eventually have become, the vast majority of the people.

The Administrative Order is certainly the nucleus and pattern of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, but it is in embryonic form, and must undergo major evolutionary developments in the course of time. Certain passages in the writings on this subject establish matters of principle, certain ones describe the ultimate goal of the Most Great Peace, and certain of them relate to stages of development on the way to the attainment of that goal. For example, in this familiar passage in His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

This House of Justice enacteth the laws and the government enforceth them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive, the executive must aid and assist the legislative body so that through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong, that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself.

In response to a question about the "government" in the above passage, Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf, on 18 April 1941, the following clarification:

By "Government" ... is meant the executive body which will enforce the laws when the Bahá'í Faith has reached the point when it is recognized and accepted entirely by any particular nation.

The same relationship between legislature and executive is expressed in the well-known passage in "The Unfoldment of World Civilization," showing how one principle is applied over successive periods.

A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth.

In relation to other international institutions, the Guardian has given the following guidance:

Touching the point raised in the Secretary's letter regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit Instructions, all important fundamental questions must be referred.

In his letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada written on 27 February 1929, Shoghi Effendi stated:

Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power. And as the Bahá'í Faith permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world, will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth all the rights, the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future superstate.

Complementing these words are the Guardian's repeated and forceful requirement that Bahá'ís strictly abstain from involvement in politics. This requirement has far-reaching implications for the method by which Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order will evolve into His World Order. We can consider, for example, the well-known passage in his letter of 21 March 1932 to the Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada:

Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions.... Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men....

... Let them beware lest, in their eagerness to further the aims of their beloved Cause, they should be led unwittingly to bargain with their Faith, to compromise with their essential principles, or to sacrifice, in return for any material advantage which their institutions may derive, the integrity of their spiritual ideals.

As one studies these words, one begins to understand the processes at work in the gradual unfoldment and establishment of the Bahá'í System.

Clearly the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth is a "political" enterprise, and the Teachings of the Faith are filled with "political" principles—using the word in the sense of the science of government and of the organization of human society. At the same time the Bahá'í world community repeatedly and emphatically denies being a "political" organization, and Bahá'ís are required, on pain of deprivation of their administrative rights, to refrain from becoming involved in "political" matters and from taking sides in "political" disputes. In other words, the Bahá'ís are following a completely different path from that usually followed by those who wish to reform society. They eschew political methods towards the achievement of their aims, and concentrate on revitalizing the hearts, minds and behavior of people and on presenting a working model as evidence of the reality and practicality of the way of life they propound.

The Bahá'í Administrative Order is the "nucleus and pattern" of the divinely intended future political system of the world, and undoubtedly non-Bahá'í governments will benefit from learning how this system works and from adopting its procedures and principles in overcoming the problems they face. Nevertheless, this Administration is primarily the framework and structure designed to be a channel for the flow of the spirit of the Cause and for the application of its Teachings. As the Guardian wrote:

It is surely for those to whose hands so priceless a heritage has been committed to prayerfully watch lest the tool should supersede the Faith itself, lest undue concern for the minute details arising from the administration of the Cause obscure the vision of its promoters, lest partiality, ambition, and worldliness tend in the course of time to becloud the radiance, stain the purity, and impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

The gradual process of the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order into the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh has been described by Shoghi Effendi in many of his writings, as in the following excerpt from his letter of 30 April 1953 to the All-America Intercontinental Teaching Conference:

This present Crusade, on the threshold of which we now stand, will, moreover, by virtue of the dynamic forces it will release and its wide repercussions over the entire surface of the globe, contribute effectually to the acceleration of yet another process of tremendous significance which will carry the steadily evolving Faith of Bahá'u'lláh through its present stages of obscurity, of repression, of emancipation and of recognition—stages one or another of which Bahá'í national communities in various parts of the world now find

themselves—to the stage of establishment, the stage at which the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh will be recognized by the civil authorities as the State Religion, similar to that which Christianity entered in the years following the death of the Emperor Constantine, a stage which must later be followed by the emergence of the Bahá'í state itself, functioning, in all religious and civil matters, in strict accordance with the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy, the Mother-Book of the Bahá'í Revelation, a stage which, in the fullness of time, will culminate in the establishment of the World Bahá'í Commonwealth, functioning in the plenitude of its powers, and which will signalize the long-awaited advent of the Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth—the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh—mirroring however faintly upon this humble handful of dust the glories of the Abhá Kingdom.

In answer to those who raise objections to this vision of a worldwide commonwealth inspired by a Divine Revelation, fearing for the freedom of minority groups or of the individual under such a system, we can explain the Bahá'í principle of upholding the rights of minorities and fostering their interests. We can also point to the fact that no person is ever compelled to accept the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and moreover, unlike the situation in certain other religions, each person has complete freedom to withdraw from the Faith if he decides that he no longer believes in its Founder or accepts His Teachings. In light of these facts alone it is evident that the growth of the Bahá'í communities to the size where a non-Bahá'í state would adopt the Faith as the State Religion, let alone to the point at which the State would accept the Law of God as its own law and the National House of Justice as its legislature, must be a supremely voluntary and democratic process.

As the Universal House of Justice wrote in its letter of 21 July 1968 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States:

It is not our purpose to impose Bahá'í teachings upon others by persuading the powers that be to enact laws enforcing Bahá'í principles, nor to join movements which have such legislation as their aim. The guidance that Bahá'í institutions offer to mankind does not comprise a series of specific answers to current problems, but rather the illumination of an entirely new way of life. Without this way of life the problems are insoluble; with it they will either not arise or, if they arise, can be resolved.

Two quotations from the writings of the Guardian bear particularly on these principles of the rights and prerogatives of minorities and of individuals. In The Advent of Divine Justice is a passage which is of fundamental significance for Bahá'í constitutional law:

Unlike the nations and peoples of the earth, be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist, whether belonging to the Old World or the New,

who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate, the racial, religious, or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction, every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it.

As for the protection of the rights of individuals, there is the following translation of a forceful passage which appears in a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of Iran, written in July 1925, in relation to a situation involving a Covenant-breaker:

... the mere fact of disaffection, estrangement, or recantation of belief, can in no wise detract from, or otherwise impinge upon, the legitimate civil rights of individuals in a free society, be it to the most insignificant degree. Were the friends to follow other than this course, it would be tantamount to a reversion on their part, in this century of radiance and light, to the ways and standards of a former age: they would reignite in men's breasts the fire of bigotry and blind fanaticism, cut themselves off from the glorious bestowals of this promised Day of God, and impede the full flow of divine assistance in this wondrous age.

All Bahá'ís, and especially those who make a profound study of the Cause, need to grasp the differences between the Bahá'í concepts of governance and those of the past, and to abstain from measuring Bahá'í institutions and methods against the faulty man-made institutions and methods hitherto current in the world. The Guardian graphically stressed these differences in his letter of 8 February 1934, known as "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh":

The Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islam—none of these can be identified or be said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned.

Among the many complementary Teachings in the Faith which resolve the dilemmas of past societies are those of the unity of mankind on the one hand, and loyalty to the Covenant on the other. As already mentioned, no one in this Dispensation is compelled to be a Bahá'í, and the division of humankind into the "clean" and the "unclean," the "faithful" and the "infidels," is abolished. At the same time, anyone who does choose to be a Bahá'í

accepts the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and, while free expression of opinion within the Bahá'í community is encouraged, this cannot ever be permitted to degenerate to the level of undermining the Covenant, for this would vitiate the very purpose of the Revelation itself.

One of the major concerns of the Universal House of Justice, as the Bahá'í Administrative Order unfolds, will be to ensure that it evolves in consonance with the spirit of the Bahá'í Revelation. While many beneficial aspects of human society at large can be safely incorporated into Bahá'í Administration, the House of Justice will guard against the corrupting influence of those non-Bahá'í political and social concepts and practices which are not in harmony with the divine standard.

The House of Justice appreciates your concern about such a fundamental issue, and asks us to assure you of its prayers in the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of your services to the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

THEOCRACY
EXPANDED
HIERARCH
TEMPORALLY
STATEHOOD
COURTSPRIESTHOOD
SOVEREIGN
ECCLESIASTIC
ASPECTS
MARRIAGE
JURE
RULE
OFFICIALPRIESTLY
SODOMYPOLICELAWSTHEOCRATIC
PROPHET
SYSTEM
CABAL
POLYGAMY
SECULAR
POLITICAL
PETITIONED
POWER
HIERARCHY
CLERICSNOVELLA
DEITY
DIVINE
AUTHORITY
THEOCRACY
ELECT
MONASTIC
COMMUNITIES
SATIRICAL
PROTO
HELD
RECOGNIZED
FACTO
EXILE
RELIGIOUS
GOVERNMENT
DICTATORSHIP
CONTROLCHURCH
REINCARNATED
POPE
STATES
CIVIL
MILITARY
TEMPORAL
LAW
ABORTIVE
MONARCHY
ADMINISTRATIVE
REPUBLIC
NARRATIONS
LEADER
ELITES
DOCTRINE
GOVERNED
REVELATION
DEIFIED
APPOINTED
INCARNATION
AUTOCHTHONOUS
MEANING

Comments

February 19. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them..abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

February 19. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them..abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

Original file: 0101.html (position #62)

February 19. On this date in 1947, a letter addressed on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Emeric Sala, stated "future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations, and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

19 February 1947 To Emeric Sala

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Your letters dated October 16th and December 19th, with enclosures, were both received, and our beloved Guardian regrets very much the unavoidable delay in answering you, caused by pressure of certain urgent matters that arose.

He feels that there must have been some misapprehension on your part of his statements regarding ***future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations, and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian.***

You asked his views about your statement on the Bahá'í Faith and Communism: frankly he feels that the less the friends discuss Communism, and the Faith in connection with it, the better these days, as the subject is a burning issue, and no matter how discreet we are we run the risk of being involved in this highly political issue.

He wishes you to know that he very deeply appreciates the innumerable services you and your dear wife render the Faith. Reports of your South American work have reached him, as well as your own report of your fifth western trip, and he is delighted to see the response you are getting from the public. Your book has, likewise, been a very useful addition to the teaching literature of the Faith in English, and you must rejoice to see the way God is blessing your labours for His Cause. Tremendous work still remains to be done in Canada before the approaching election of its first National Spiritual Assembly ; he hopes you and Mrs. Sala will devote as much of your time to this field as you can.

Assuring you of his loving prayers on your behalf, and for the success of your services.

Yours with Bahá'í love,

R. Rabbani

P.S. Through Mr. Schopflocher he recently learned of your joint gift of a property

> *to the Cause in Canada for a Summer School. This is much appreciated, and he hopes it will develop into a fine institution in the future!*
>
> *May the Beloved, Whose Cause you are serving with such zeal, devotion and perseverance, reward you for your labours, guide every step you take in the path of service, and aid you to enrich the record of your meritorious and notable accomplishments,*
>
> *Your true and grateful brother,*
>
> *Shoghi*

On March 9, 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote about the interpretations of Sacred Writings, quoting Shoghi Effendi's words "...regarding future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations, and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

> *Interpretations of Sacred Writings*
>
> *9 MARCH 1987*
>
> *To an individual Bahá'í*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friend,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 8 February 1987 in which you inquire about the role of the individual in interpretation of the Writings: specifically whether given the existence of interpretations by the Master and the Guardian of passages from the Writings, there remains room for personal interpretations of these same texts. We are instructed to convey the following points in reply.*
>
> *The interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian are divinely guided statements of what the Word of God means and as such these interpretations are binding on the friends. However, the existence of authoritative interpretations in no way precludes the individual from engaging in his own study of the teachings*

and thereby arriving at his own interpretation or understanding. Indeed, Bahá'u'lláh invites the believers to "immerse" themselves in the "ocean" of His "words," that they "may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths."[1]

Far from knowledge being limited, Bahá'u'lláh quotes the Muslim tradition that "every knowledge hath seventy meanings," and asserts that the "meaning" of the Word of God "can never be exhausted."[2] This potential richness of meaning is underlined by the provision whereby future Guardians, while not abrogating the "interpretations of former Guardians," may "elaborate and elucidate former interpretations," as set out in the extract from a letter dated 19 February 1947 which was written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer:

> *. . . regarding future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations, and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian.*

Individual interpretations based on a person's understanding of the teachings constitute the fruit of man's rational power and may well contribute to a more complete understanding of the Faith. Such views, however, lack authority. The believers are, therefore, free to accept or disregard them. Further, the manner in which an individual presents his interpretation is important. For example, he must at no time deny or contend with the authoritative interpretation, but rather offer his idea as a contribution to knowledge, making it clear that his views are merely his own.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Notes

1. *KA, ¶182.*
2. *KI, ¶283; GWB, no. 89.1.*

Comments

February 19. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer explained that "The Number Nine is Reverenced for Two Reasons by Bahá'ís."

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> *1372. The Number Nine is Reverenced for Two Reasons by Bahá'ís*
>
> *"Concerning the number nine: The Bahá'ís reverence this for two reasons, first because it is considered by those who are interested in numbers as a sign of perfection. The second consideration which is the more important one is that it is the numerical value for the word 'Baha'. (B=2, h=5, a=1, and there is an accent at the end of the word which is also = 1; the 'a' after the 'B' is not written in Persian so it does not count.) In the Semitic languages--both Arabic and Hebrew--every letter of the alphabet had a numerical value, so instead of using figures to denote numbers they used letters and compounds of letters. Thus every word had both a literal meaning and also a numerical value. This practice is no more in use but during the time of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab it was quite in vogue among the educated classes, and we find it very much used in the Bayan. As the word Baha*

also stood for the number nine it could be used interchangeably with it.

"Besides these two significances the number nine has no other meaning. It is however enough to make the Bahá'ís use it when an arbitrary number is to be chosen."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 19, 1932)

Comments

February 19. On this date in 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

February 19. On this date in 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

Interestingly, while Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim:

> *"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."*

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

February 19. On this date in 1922, Helen Goodall, Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, passed away. In 1908 she had made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu’l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908."

Original file: 0098.html (position #59)

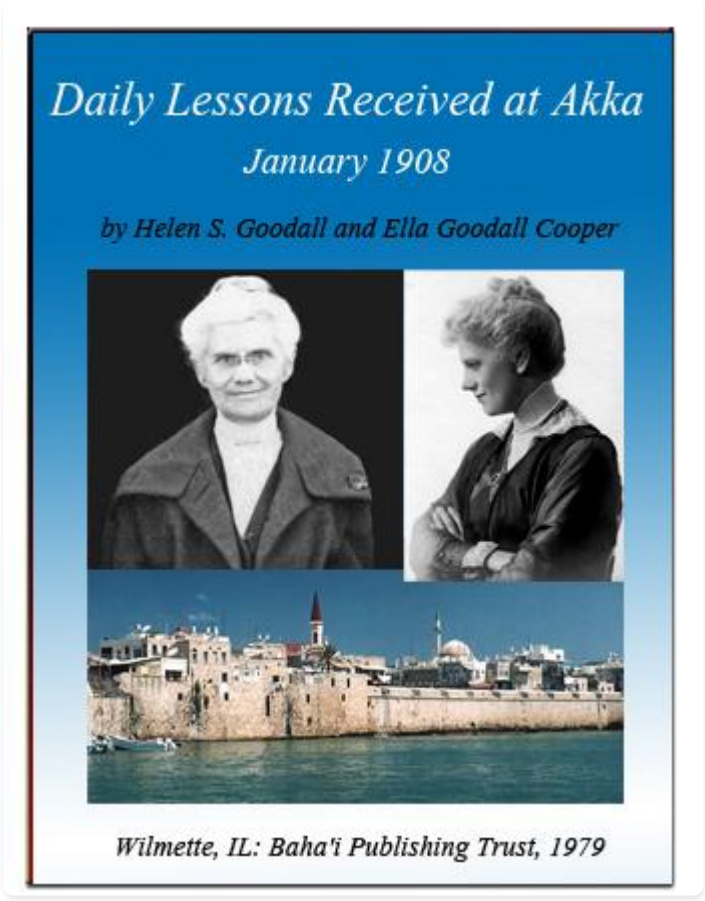
February 19. On this date in 1922, Helen Goodall, Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, passed away. In 1908 she had made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu’l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled *Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908*.

The book contains many observations of 'Abdu’l-Bahá's household, daily routine and other visitors. The ladies also chronicle some of the lessons they received, such as this recounting of the *Exile of Bahá'u'lláh* by Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali

> *When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.*
>
> *Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.*
>
> *The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.*

The book also describes in the chapter titled *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH* their impressions on viewing the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh

> *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH*
>
> *The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka.*
>
> *This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble Face and Form embody the Words, "The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!" and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love.*


Daily Lessons Received at Akka
January 1908
by Helen S. Goodall and Ella Goodall Cooper
Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979

Comments

February 20. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith...the dominating purpose of such a collaboration which is to secure in time the recognition by those with whom they are associated...the Bahá'í Revelation...

Original file: 0097.html (position #58)

February 20. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada emphasizing a **"twofold method of directly and indirectly winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith,"** noting **"Bahá'ís in every land are**

ready, nay anxious, to associate themselves by word and deed with any association of men" and that **"They should always bear in mind, however, the dominating purpose of such a collaboration which is to secure in time the recognition by those with whom they are associated of the paramount necessity and the true significance of the Bahá'í Revelation in this day."**

> *Letter 39 To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.*
>
> *Dear and precious fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God:--*
>
> *The communications addressed to me by your indefatigable and distinguished secretary, dated October 28, November 8, 11, 18, December 4, 16 and January 27th, have been received, and together with their enclosures read and carefully noted. I cannot but admire the spirit of unrelaxing resolve and harmonious cooperation with which you are conducting the ever-expanding activities of the Cause in a land upon which our Beloved has lavished His richest blessings, and for the spiritual potentialities of which He cherished the brightest hopes. The vigorous efforts you are exerting to consolidate the forces which the Almighty has placed in your hands; the resourcefulness you display by the measures you have initiated for the furtherance of the Cause; the magnificent response with which you have met the piteous call of your suffering brethren of the East--all proclaim your worthiness of the unexampled efforts which, in your country more than in any other land, `Abdu'l-Bahá has exerted for the spread of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> ***Twofold Teaching Method***
>
> *In connection with the World Unity Conferences, which you have organized, I desire to assure you of my heartfelt appreciation of such a splendid conception. I am profoundly impressed by the generous assistance spontaneously offered by those who, faithful to their other obligations, have risen to insure the financial success of such a noble Plan. I am grateful to those local Assemblies and individuals who have given it their whole-hearted support in their respective fields.*
>
> *As to the policy that should be adopted with regard to these Conferences and other Bahá'í activities in general, it appears increasingly evident that as the Movement grows in strength and power the National Spiritual Assemblies should be*

encouraged, if circumstances permit and the means at their disposal justify, to resort to the ***twofold method of directly and indirectly winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith.*** *The one method would assume an open, decisive and challenging tone. The other, without implying in any manner the slightest departure from strict loyalty to the Cause of God, would be progressive and cautious. Experience will reveal the fact that each of the methods in its own special way might suit a particular temperament and class of people, and that each in the present state of a constantly fluctuating society, should be judiciously attempted and utilized.*

It is, I feel, for the National representatives of the believers in every land to utilize and combine both methods, the outspoken as well as the gradual, in such a manner as to secure the greatest benefits and the fullest advantage for this steadily-growing Cause. Every staunch and high-minded believer is thoroughly convinced of the unfailing efficacy of every humanitarian undertaking which boldly and unreservedly proclaims the source of its motive power to be the consciousness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Yet, if we but call to mind the practice generally adopted by `Abdu'l-Bahá, we cannot fail to perceive the wisdom, nay the necessity, of gradually and cautiously disclosing to the eyes of an unbelieving world the implications of a Truth which, by its own challenging nature, it is so difficult for it to comprehend and embrace.

It was He, our beloved `Abdu'l-Bahá, our true and shining Exemplar, who with infinite tact and patience, whether in His public utterances or in private converse, adapted the presentation of the fundamentals of the Cause to the varying capacities and the spiritual receptiveness of His hearers. He never hesitated, however, to tear the veil asunder and reveal to the spiritually ripened those challenging verities that set forth in its true light the relationship of this Supreme Revelation with the Dispensations of the past. Unashamed and unafraid when challenged to assert in its entirety the stupendous claim of Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'ís, whether laboring as individuals or functioning as an organized community, feel certain that in the face of the apathy, the gross materialism, and the superficiality of society today, a progressive disclosure of the magnitude of the claim of Bahá'u'lláh would constitute the most effective means for the attainment of the end so greatly desired by even the staunchest and most zealous advocate of the Faith.

Fully aware of the repeated statements of `Abdu'l-Bahá that universality is of God, Bahá'ís in every land are ready, nay anxious, to

associate themselves by word and deed with any association of men *which, after careful scrutiny, they feel satisfied is free from every tinge of partisanship and politics and is wholly devoted to the interests of all mankind. In their collaboration with such associations they would extend any moral and material assistance they can afford, after having fulfilled their share of support to those institutions that affect directly the interests of the Cause.* ***They should always bear in mind, however, the dominating purpose of such a collaboration which is to secure in time the recognition by those with whom they are associated of the paramount necessity and the true significance of the Bahá'í Revelation in this day***

As the Movement extends the bounds of its influence and its opportunities for fuller recognition multiply, the twofold character of the obligations imposed on its National elected representatives should, I feel, be increasingly emphasized. Whilst chiefly engaged in the pursuit of their major task, consisting chiefly in the formation and the consolidation of Bahá'í administrative institutions, they should endeavor to participate, within recognized limits, in the work of institutions which though unaware of the claim of the Bahá'í Cause are prompted by a sincere desire to promote the spirit that animates the Faith. In the pursuit of their major task their function is to preserve the identity of the Cause and the purity of the mission of Bahá'u'lláh. In their minor undertaking their purpose should be to imbue with the spirit of power and strength such movements as in their restricted scope are endeavoring to achieve what is near and dear to the heart of every true Bahá'í. It would even appear at times to be advisable and helpful as a supplement to their work for the Bahá'ís to initiate any undertaking, not specifically designated as Bahá'í, provided they have ascertained that such an undertaking would constitute the best way of approach to those whose minds and hearts are as yet unprepared for a full acceptance of the claim of Bahá'u'lláh. These twofold obligations devolving upon organized Bahá'í communities, far from neutralizing the effects of one another or of appearing antagonistic in their aims, should be regarded as complementary and fulfilling, each in its way, a vital and necessary function.

It is for the National representatives of the Bahá'í Cause to observe the conditions under which they labor, to estimate the forces that are at work in their own surroundings, to weigh carefully and prayerfully the merits of either procedure, and to form a correct judgment as to the degree of emphasis that should be placed upon these twofold methods. Then and only then will they be enabled to protect and stimulate on one hand the independent growth of the Bahá'í Faith, and on the

other vindicate the claim of its universal principles to the doubtful and unbelieving.

I have already considered these delicate and complex issues with the Bahá'í representatives whom I have requested to gather in the Holy Land in the hope of arriving at the best possible solution of the pressing and intricate problems that confront the development of the Bahá'í Cause. I have asked our dearly-beloved brother, Mr. Mountfort Mills, whose services to the Cause only future generations can estimate, to acquaint you with these and other considerations, the delicacy and scope of which only a verbal explanation can adequately reveal. He will fully and authoritatively inform you regarding the policy that should govern the conduct of the Star of the West, the character and the range of the Bahá'í Bibliography to be inserted in the next edition of the Bahá'í Year Book, the present position of Bahá'u'lláh's House in Baghdád, the hopes and desires I cherish for the successful conclusion of the Plan of Unified Action, and the consequences and possibilities involved in the decision of Egypt's religious Tribunal regarding the Muslim Bahá'ís in that land.

The splendid record of the action taken by the national and local representatives of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, embodied in the compilation of newspaper cuttings which you have recently sent me, will be forwarded to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia. I will request them to pass it on from hand to hand, that the rank and file of the sufferers in that distracted country may obtain the strength and solace which the perusal of such a noble record of service is bound to produce.

Regarding the publicity campaign, recently launched, with your consent and under your general supervision, by a group of devoted friends, I desire to express my earnest hope that it may be richly blessed by our Beloved and yield abundant fruit. I am gratified to learn that those who have conceived such a comprehensive plan and have generously supported it by every means in their power have refrained from any action that would involve the imposing of a fresh burden upon those who have incurred the financial obligations connected with the Budget Plan. I earnestly hope that those who have undertaken to finance this project with such spontaneous generosity have already fulfilled their sacred obligations in connection with the Plan, and will not allow any pledges they have made for publicity to interfere with their regular contributions to the National Fund, the paramount importance of which has already been emphasized.

The Spirit of Enterprise

It is the duty and privilege of the National and Local Assemblies if they find that the pressing requirements of their local and national budgets have been adequately met, to encourage individuals and groups to initiate and conduct, with their knowledge and consent, any undertaking that would serve to enhance the work which they have set themselves to achieve. Not content with appeals addressed to each and every believer to offer any constructive suggestions or plan that would remedy an existing grievance, they should, by every means in their power, stimulate the spirit of enterprise among the believers in order to further the teaching as well as the administrative work of the Cause. They should endeavor by personal contact and written appeals, to imbue the body of the faithful with a deep sense of personal responsibility, and urge every believer, whether high or low, poor or wealthy, to conceive, formulate and execute such measures and projects as would redound, in the eyes of their representatives, to the power and the fair name of this sacred Cause.

In my hours of prayer at the holy Shrines, I will supplicate that the light of Divine Guidance may illumine your path, and enable you to utilize in the most effective manner that spirit of individual enterprise which, once kindled in the breasts of each and every believer and directed by the discipline of the majestic Law of Bahá'u'lláh, imposed upon us, will carry our beloved Cause forward to achieve its glorious destiny.

Your true brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

February 20, 1927.

Comments

February 20. On this date in 1990, Jalál Kháḍih, a Hand of the Cause of God who had served as a Custodian and previously on the NSA of Iran, died in Toronto, Canada.

Original file: 0096.html (position #57)

February 20. On this date in 1990, Jalál Kháḍih, a Hand of the Cause of God who had served as a Custodian and previously on the NSA of Iran, died in Toronto, Canada.

Jalal was born into a Baha'i family in Tehran in 1897. He achieved the rank of Colonel in the Iranian army. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran in 1944 and served as treasurer, but he resigned in 1951 so he could travel across the country to teach the Faith. In 1952 he went on pilgrimage to the Haifa . He was named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi on December 7, 1953, and represented the Guardian at the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly for North-East Asia in 1957. He was elected a Custodian in 1957, and served in that position until the formation of the Universal House of Justice in 1963. After the Universal House of Justice was established he moved to Brazil.

He lived in Brazil until he moved back to Iran in 1969, where he lived until 1984. He spent his later years in Canada and is buried in Toronto.

His career is typical for individuals in the Bahá'í hierarchy, whether in an elected office or in an appointed offce from which the higher elected officials invariably come from.

At all levels, including the LSAs, Bahá'í leaders are generally as authoritarian, if not more,

than clergy from other religious faiths, which as Dale Husband points out, is one of the Four Ways to Create a Religion of Hypocrites:

> 1. *State that religion no longer needs clergy.....and replace them with leaders that are as authoritarian as the clergy ever was.*
> 2. *Claim that men and women should be equal.....but then deny women membership in the all-powerful leadership council of the religion.*
> 3. *Condemn as heretics those who believe in your religion but dare to challenge the claims of your religion's current leadership, while at the same time claiming to welcome as friends the followers of other religions.*
> 4. *Claim there is harmony between science and religion, but also claim that anything your leaders say is absolutely true, even if on topics science is expected to address.*
>
> *Any one of these makes a religion not worth following, but what do you do if you find a religion that has all four such contradictions*

Comments

February 20. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote an Assembly inquiring "about the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace. It is important to keep in mind that while these activities are generally carried out in the name of peace, such occasions are motivated by ..."

Original file: 0095.html (position #56)

February 20. On this date in 2003, the Universal House of Justice wrote an Assembly inquiring "about the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace. It is important to keep in mind that while these activities are generally carried out in the name of peace, such occasions are motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world. Not only would it be contrary to the Bahá'í principle of non-involvement in politics for individual believers, or Bahá'í institutions, to become associated with such activities, it could also be harmful to the

interests of the Faith internationally. The point to bear in mind here is that current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in principle but are focused on a specific dispute among governments. As you can no doubt understand, Bahá'í participation in public demonstrations involving controversial issues would undermine the Faith's essential purpose of promoting unity in all aspects of human affairs, and your desire to remain focused on the essential work of the Faith is deeply appreciated."

> *20 February 2003*
>
> *The Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of ...*
>
> *Dear Baha'i Friends,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice was concerned to learn from your email letter dated 18 February 2003 that your Assembly has decided to participate in activities aimed at protesting against the United States government's actions in Iraq and the Middle East.*
>
> *While the activities you describe are to be carried out as elements of what is purported to be a peace campaign, it is obvious that the occasion is motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world. Not only would it be contrary to the Baha'i principle of non-involvement in politics for Baha'i institutions, or individual believers, to become associated with such activities, it would also be harmful to the interests of the Faith internationally. The point to bear in mind here is that this event is not intended to promote peace in general but is focused on a specific dispute among governments. You should, therefore, reverse your decision; and if it becomes necessary to give a reason for not participating in the event, you need simply to explain that the Baha'i community prefers not to join in public demonstrations involving controversial issues, as this would undermine its essential purpose of promoting unity in all aspects of human affairs.*
>
> *With loving Baha'i greetings,*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *cc: International Teaching Centre Board of Counsellors in Asia*

In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq.

David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On August 11, 2003, *The Independent* carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

On July 17, 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter "to the Bahá'ís of the World" announcing "with utter shock and desolating grief that the Bahá'ís in Baghdad discovered on 26 June that the "most holy habitation" of Bahá'u'lláh had been razed almost to the ground to make way for the construction of a mosque," at the end of what the Universal Hose of Justice calls a "highly delicate situation in Iraq over the last tumultuous decade."

It is somewhat ironic, that in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq. David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On August 11, 2003, *The Independent* carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

Chronicle / Brant Ward

Comments

February 20. On this date in 1936, Percy Woodcock, an early Canadian Bahá'í who served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity (the precursor to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of United States and Canada), died in Montreal.

Original file: 0094.html (position #55)

February 20. On this date in 1936, Percy Woodcock, an early Canadian Bahá'í who served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity (the precursor to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of United States and Canada), died in Montreal.

Percy Woodcock was born in Athens, Ontario to Reverend Eli Woodcock, an Episcopalian minister, and Phoebe Ann Wiltse on August 17, 1855. He was raised as a Methodist.

He studied art at Albert College in Belleville in the 1860's. In 1878 he married Aloysis Pratt, a Canadian from Montreal. In 1881 he moved to Paris where he continued his study of art at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts. He held an exhibition at the Paris Salon in 1883. He then studied under Benjamin Constant, and studied in England and Holland before moving to Brockville, Canada, in 1887. In 1888 he became Principal of Brockville Art School, and served in the position until 1890 when he began travelling across North America and

Europe to exhibit his paintings.

In the early 1900's Percy discovered the Bahá'í Faith, likely when he exhibited art in Chicago in 1903, and he associated with Bahá'ís in Chicago and Montreal and attended the Green Acre summer school in Maine. He, his wife Aloysia, and one of their children, May, became Bahá'ís. He taught the Faith after becoming a Bahá'í but incorporated his personal ideas which were not related to the Faith, such as symbolism of the Egyptian pyramids.

In 1908 he temporarily lived in New York, while maintaining a residence in Brockville. In 1909 he reportedly spoke to Moses True, husband of Corinne True, about the Faith and received an informal declaration. He went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1909.In 1910 he spoke on the Faith at Howard University, and in 1911 he and his family attended that years Green Acre Summer School.

Woodcock began to clash with the New York Bahá'í community because he was opposed to organizing the community, and in 1911 he and his family moved to Montreal. He was elected to the Bahá'í Temple Unity in 1911, an administrative body for the North American Bahá'í's which was organizing efforts to construct a Temple in the US, and he was also appointed chair of a publishing commission.

In December 1911 Percy visited Egypt where he met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Ramleh. In 1912 he traveled to Europe with his wife and daughter and met with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Naples, and they traveled with Him and His party on their voyage to the United States on the Cedric.

Percy lived in Montreal for the rest of his life, and died there on February 20, 1936. He had outlived his three children.

Comments

February 21. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Baku, Azerbaijan, and another in Accra, Ghana.

Original file: 0093.html (position #54)

February 21. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Baku, Azerbaijan, and another in Accra, Ghana.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the

Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the

International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco

Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

Comments

February 21. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi cabled the Bahá'ís of the UK, warning "owing to his brother's secession (from the) Faith, adherence (to) Islam, participation (in) politics, and association with his other brothers and mother who have flagrantly disobeyed Master's Will ..."

Original file: 0092.html (position #53)

February 21. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram to the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom, warning them about an individual that "owing to his brother's secession (from the) Faith, adherence (to) Islam, participation (in) politics, and association with his other brothers and mother who have flagrantly disobeyed Master's Will, communication with him and them (are) forbidden. Assembly should exercise utmost vigilance (in) this matter otherwise as Master repeatedly warned contaminating influence will spread and imperil (the) structure of the faith. Cable his response, show utmost firmness."

21 February 1946

ASSEMBLY SHOULD EXPLAIN TO ... OWING HIS BROTHER'S SECESSION FAITH ADHERENCE ISLAM PARTICIPATION POLITICS AND ASSOCIATION WITH HIS OTHER BROTHERS AND MOTHER WHO HAVE FLAGRANTLY DISOBEYED MASTER'S WILL COMMUNICATION WITH HIM AND THEM FORBIDDEN. ASSEMBLY SHOULD EXERCISE UTMOST VIGILANCE THIS VITAL MATTER OTHERWISE AS MASTER REPEATEDLY WARNED CONTAMINATING INFLUENCE WILL SPREAD AND IMPERIL STRUCTURE FAITH. CABLE HIS RESPONSE SHOW UTMOST FIRMNESS.

SHOGHI

Comments

February 21. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Tablet of Joseph does not refer to Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith we do not consider a Prophet, minor or otherwise. Certainly no references he made would have foretold the coming of this Revelation in his capacity as a Prophet."

Original file: 0091.html (position #52)

February 21. On this date in 1942, a letter addressed to an individual believer on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "The Tablet of Joseph does not refer to Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith we do not consider a Prophet, minor or otherwise. Certainly no references he made would have foretold the coming of this Revelation in his capacity as a Prophet."

> *1611. Tablet of Joseph*

> *"The Tablet of Joseph does not refer to* ***Joseph Smith****.*
>
> *"**Joseph Smith we do not consider a Prophet, minor or otherwise.** Certainly no references he made would have foretold the coming of this Revelation in his capacity as a Prophet."*
>
> *(Ibid.)*

The Bahá'í notion of progressive revelation exlcudes many key figures who have generated significant religious movements, whether in the distant past like Confucius or in the 19th Century like Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Joseph Smith. All religious founders are not universally accepted as prophets.

Comments

February 21. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi clarified that "Bahá'u'lláh never revealed a Tablet to the President of the U.S.A. In His Book the Aqdas He revealed words addressed to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas, but no single Tablet was ever revealed to any one of them."

Original file: 0090.html (position #51)

February 21. On this date in 1942, a letter addressed to an individual believer on behalf of Shoghi Effendi clarified that "Bahá'u'lláh never revealed a Tablet to the President of the U.S.A. In His Book the Aqdas He revealed words addressed to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas, but no single Tablet was ever revealed to any one of them"

> *1610. Tablet to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas*

> *"Bahá'u'lláh never revealed a Tablet to the President of the U.S.A. In His Book the Aqdas He revealed words addressed to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas, but no single Tablet was ever revealed to any one of them."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 21, 1942)*

The following is the excerpt from the Aqdas addressed to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas...

> *Hearken ye, O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein, unto that which the Dove is warbling on the Branch of Eternity:* ***"There is none other God but Me, the Ever-Abiding, the Forgiving, the All-Bountiful."*** *Adorn ye the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Creator of the heavens.* ***Thus counselleth you He Who is the Dayspring of Names, as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. The Promised One hath appeared in this glorified Station,*** *whereat all beings, both seen and unseen, have rejoiced. Take ye advantage of the Day of God. Verily, to meet Him is better for you than all that whereon the sun shineth, could ye but know it. O concourse of rulers! Give ear unto that which hath been raised from the* ***Dayspring of Grandeur: "Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Lord of Utterance, the All-Knowing."*** *Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of* ***your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.***

Comments

February 21. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations, that they have not the capability to hearken to the call of the Kingdom of God, that the veil of bigotry has ..."

Original file: 0089.html (position #50)

February 21. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations, that they have not the capability to hearken to the call of the Kingdom of God, that the veil of bigotry has so covered the eyes..."

From 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of Canada and Greenland*, which is the 13th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, written in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of Abbúd in Acre, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of Canada (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Mackenzie, Keewatin, Ungava, Franklin Islands) and Greenland.

Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

> *He is God!*
>
> *O ye kind friends and the maidservants of the Merciful:*
>
> *IN THE great Qur'án, God says: "Thou shalt see no difference in the creatures of God." 1 In other words, He says: From the ideal standpoint, there is no variation between the creatures of God, because they are all created by Him. From the above premise, a conclusion is drawn, that there is no difference between countries. The future of the Dominion of Canada, however, is very great, and the events connected with it infinitely glorious. It shall become the object of the glance of providence, and shall show forth the bounties of the All-Glorious.*
>
> *'Abdu'l-Bahá during his journey and sojourn through that Dominion obtained the utmost joy. Before My departure,* ***many souls warned Me not to travel to Montreal, saying, the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations, that they have not the capability to hearken to the call of the Kingdom of God, that the veil of bigotry has so covered the eyes that they have deprived themselves from beholding the signs of the Most Great Guidance, and that the dogmas have taken possession of the hearts entirely, leaving no trace of reality.*** *They asserted that should the Sun of Reality shine with perfect splendor throughout that Dominion, the dark, impenetrable clouds of superstitions have so enveloped the horizon that it would be utterly impossible for anyone to behold its rays.*
>
> ***But these stories did not have any effect on the resolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*** *He, trusting in God, turned his face toward Montreal. When he entered that city he observed all the doors open, he found the hearts in the utmost receptivity and the ideal power of the Kingdom of God removing every obstacle and obstruction. In the churches and meetings of that Dominion he called men to the Kingdom of God with the utmost joy, and scattered such seeds which will be irrigated with the hand of divine power. Undoubtedly those seeds will grow, becoming green and verdant, and many rich harvests will be gathered. In the promotion of the divine principles he found no antagonist and no adversary. The*

believers he met in that city were in the utmost spirituality, and attracted with the fragrances of God. He found that through the effort of the maidservant of God ***Mrs. Maxwell*** *a number of the sons and daughters of the Kingdom in that Dominion were gathered together and associated with each other, increasing this joyous exhilaration day by day. The time of sojourn was limited to a number of days, but the results in the future are inexhaustible. When a farmer comes into the possession of a virgin soil, in a short time he will bring under cultivation a large field. Therefore I hope that in the future Montreal may become so stirred, that the melody of the Kingdom may travel to all parts of the world from that Dominion and the breaths of the Holy Spirit may spread from that center to the East and the West of America.*

O ye believers of God! ***Be not concerned with the smallness of your numbers, neither be oppressed by the multitude of an unbelieving world. **Five grains of wheat will be endued with heavenly blessing, whereas a thousand tons of tares will yield no results or effect. One fruitful tree will be conducive to the life of society, whereas a thousand forests of wild trees offer no fruits. The plain is covered with pebbles, but precious stones are rare. One pearl is better than a thousand wildernesses of sand, especially this pearl of great price, which is endowed with divine blessing. Erelong thousands of other pearls will be born from it. When that pearl associates and becomes the intimate of the pebbles, they also all change into pearls.***

Again I repeat that the future of Canada, whether from a material or a spiritual standpoint, is very great. Day by day civilization and freedom shall increase. The clouds of the Kingdom will water the seeds of guidance which have been sown there. ***Consequently, rest ye not, seek ye no composure, attach not yourselves to the luxuries of this ephemeral world, free yourselves from every attachment, and strive with heart and soul to become fully established in the Kingdom of God. Gain ye the heavenly treasures.*** *Day by day become ye more illumined. Draw ye nearer and nearer unto the threshold of oneness. Become ye the manifestors of spiritual favors and the dawning-places of infinite lights! If it is possible,* ***send ye teachers to other portions of Canada; likewise, dispatch ye teachers to Greenland and the home of the Eskimos.***

As regards the teachers, they must completely divest themselves from the old

garments and be invested with a new garment. According to the statement of Christ, they must attain to the station of rebirth—that is, whereas in the first instance they were born from the womb of the mother, this time they must be born from the womb of the world of nature. Just as they are now totally unaware of the experiences of the fetal world, they must also forget entirely the defects of the world of nature. They must be baptized with the water of life, the fire of the love of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit; be satisfied with little food, but take a large portion from the heavenly table. They must disengage themselves from temptation and covetousness, and be filled with the spirit. Through the effect of their pure breath, they must change the stone into the brilliant ruby and the shell into pearl. Like unto the cloud of vernal shower, they must transform the black soil into the rose garden and orchard. ***They must make the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the extinguished one enkindled and set aglow, and the dead quickened.***

Upon you be greeting and praise!

> *PRAISE be to Thee, O my God! These are Thy servants who are attracted by the fragrances of Thy mercifulness, are enkindled by the fire burning in the tree of Thy singleness, and whose eyes are brightened by beholding the splendors of the light shining in the Sinai of Thy oneness.*
>
> *O Lord! Loose their tongues to make mention of Thee amongst Thy people, suffer them to speak forth Thy praise through Thy grace and loving-kindness, assist them with the cohorts of Thine angels, strengthen their loins in Thy service, and make them the signs of Thy guidance amongst Thy creatures.*
>
> *Verily, Thou art the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.*

The spreaders of the fragrances of God should recite this prayer every morning:

> *O GOD, my God! Thou beholdest this weak one begging for celestial strength, this poor one craving Thy heavenly treasures, this thirsty one longing for the fountain of eternal life, this afflicted one yearning for Thy*

promised healing through Thy boundless mercy which Thou hast destined for Thy chosen servants in Thy kingdom on high.

O Lord! I have no helper save Thee, no shelter besides Thee, and no sustainer except Thee. Assist me with Thine angels to diffuse Thy holy fragrances and to spread abroad Thy teachings amongst the choicest of Thy people. 98

O my Lord! Suffer me to be detached from aught else save Thee, to hold fast to the hem of Thy bounty, to be wholly devoted to Thy Faith, to remain fast and firm in Thy love and to observe what Thou hast prescribed in Thy Book.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.

1. *Qur'án 67:3.*

Comments

February 21. On this date in 1852, Isabella D. Brittingham was born. An early American Bahá'í, she converted after attending a course of "Truth Seeker" classes taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in New York City in 1898. She was posthumously named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.

Original file: 0088.html (position #49)

February 21. On this date in 1852, Isabella D. Brittingham was born. An early American Bahá'í, she converted after attending a course of "Truth Seeker" classes taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in New York City in 1898. She was posthumously named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.

Isabella Matilda Davis Brittingham was born on February 21, 1852 in Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Benjamin Davis, a farmer, lumberman, and teacher. He was in turn a grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence–John Morton–and was a staunch Presbyterian, serving as an elder of local Presbyterian churches for sixty years wherever he lived. Her mother was Elizabeth Nicholson Hamill, also of Pennsylvania Presbyterian descent. Brittingham was the youngest of seven children. On 10 November 1886 she married James Francis Brittingham (1855-1940), a devoted Episcopalian from Princess Anne, Maryland. He was a railroad employee, which resulted in frequent moves for the couple. They resided in Pocomoke, MD, until 1895; greater New York City until 1901; Johnstown, N.Y., until 1904; Seabright and Orange, N. J. until 1909. They never had children.

In the summer of 1897 James's sister, Charlotte E. Dixon, heard of the Bahá'í Faith in Chicago and accepted it. She immediately wrote James about it, but in an indirect fashion, because she did not want his strong Episcopal beliefs to prejudice him against the new Faith. Isabella was much more receptive and when Ibrahim Kheiralla, who first brought the Bahá'í Faith to the United States, went to New York to teach his Bahá'í lessons there, starting in February 1898, both Brittinghams were members of his first class. They soon became active Bahá'ís and began to teach the Faith to the other members of Grace Episcopal Church in Union, New Jersey. The result was the conversion of several families and the establishment of the Bahá'í community of northern Hudson County, New Jersey. In late 1899 the "North Hudson" Bahá'ís, as they called themselves, organized themselves into a community; Edward Getsinger, who visited the community after his pilgrimage to Akka, appointed a Board of Counsel of five men, including James Brittingham. Even though Isabella was not a member of the Board, she was made its corresponding secretary. When the Brittinghams moved to Johnstown, New York, west of Albany, in late 1900 they started building a Bahá'í community there as well. In November 1900 Mírzá Asadu'lláh and Haji Hassan-i-Khurásání visited the Brittinghams there and deepened their knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith.

In September 1901 Isabella Brittingham went on pilgrimage, visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá for several days. The knowledge of the Faith she gained helped her complete a book, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in a Sequence of Four Lessons,* published by the Bahá'í Publishing Society of Chicago in 1902 and subsequently issued in at least nine editions through 1920. The lessons were Brittingham's own expansion of the last four lessons Kheiralla taught, but with some important additions. Brittingham was a theological liberal; she praised new religious movements that Kheiralla condemned, indicated belief in the theory of evolution (which Kheiralla rejected), and accepted higher biblical criticism (which

Kheiralla never understood). Much of the book is a compilation of biblical prophecies that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá claimed to fill; it also offered the American Bahá'ís one of the first accurate summaries of the life of Bahá'u'lláh available in English.

In addition to her book, Brittingham became an early traveling teacher for the Bahá'í Faith, making her perhaps the most prominent American Bahá'í woman in the 1900-12 period, and a prominent and highly respected American Bahá'í teacher right up to her death in 1924. Many of her talks were preserved in typed form; they reveal a consistent focus on the spiritual growth of the individual, and a desire to combat misunderstanding of the Bahá'í teachings, such as psychic interpretations of spirituality. She was also in frequent communication with 'Abdu'l-Bahá; the Bahá'í National Archives in Wilmette, Ill., contains about fifty-five tablets addressed to her.

In 1905 Brittingham attended the first Nineteen-day Feast held in North America, sponsored by the New York City Bahá'í Board of Counsel. In early 1906 she traveled to every major Bahá'í community in the Midwest to promote the new institution of the Nineteen-day Feast; in early 1907 she traveled over eight thousand miles in four and a half months, visited twenty Bahá'í communities, and as she herself noted, "slept in over forty beds" in order to establish Feast on the Pacific coast and in the Mountain states.

In 1910 Brittingham began to correspond regularly with Bahá'í women in Iran, encouraging them to strive to become equal to Iranian men. Her indirect role in the development of the Iranian Bahá'í community has not previously been recognized. She played a major part in bringing into the Faith three of the four American Bahá'í women who settled in Tehran between 1909 and 1911: Dr. Susan Moody, who became a Bahá'í during Brittingham's 1903 visit to Chicago; Brittingham's sister's daughter, Elizabeth Stewart; and Lillian Kappes, one of the former members of Grace Episcopal Church.

Throughout the 'teens Brittingham traveled to teach the Faith, especially in the Pacific states and the Southwest. In Douglas, Arizona, she established an active Bahá'í community; there she brought back into the Bahá'í Faith Mrs. Nellie Stevison French, who had become disillusioned with it as a result of the moral conduct of Ibrahim Kheiralla. Mrs. French later became an important writer, editor, administrator, and teacher of the Faith. When Brittingham's health began to decline she settled in Philadelphia, where the Revell family cared for her; in their home she died of a heart attack on January 28, 1924. Her husband remained an active Bahá'í in the New York City area until his death on July 24, 1940.

Comments

February 21. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of Canada and Greenland," which is the 13th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

Original file: 0087.html (position #48)

February 21. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of Canada and Greenland*, which is the 13th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of Abbúd in Acre, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of Canada (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Mackenzie, Keewatin, Ungava, Franklin Islands) and Greenland. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

He is God!

O ye kind friends and the maidservants of the Merciful:

IN THE great Qur'án, God says: "Thou shalt see no difference in the creatures of God." 1 In other words, He says: From the ideal standpoint, there is no variation between the creatures of God, because they are all created by Him. From the above premise, a conclusion is drawn, that there is no difference between countries. The future of the Dominion of Canada, however, is very great, and the events connected with it infinitely glorious. It shall become the object of the glance of providence, and shall show forth the bounties of the All-Glorious.

'Abdu'l-Bahá during his journey and sojourn through that Dominion obtained the utmost joy. Before My departure, ***many souls warned Me not to travel to Montreal, saying, the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations, that they have not the capability to hearken to the call of the Kingdom of God, that the veil of bigotry has so covered the eyes that they have deprived themselves from beholding the signs of the Most Great Guidance, and that the dogmas have taken possession of the hearts entirely, leaving no trace of reality.*** *They asserted that should the Sun of Reality shine with perfect splendor throughout that Dominion, the dark, impenetrable clouds of superstitions have so enveloped the horizon that it would be utterly impossible for anyone to behold its rays.*

But these stories did not have any effect on the resolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *He, trusting in God, turned his face toward Montreal. When he entered that city he observed all the doors open, he found the hearts in the utmost receptivity and the ideal power of the Kingdom of God removing every obstacle and obstruction. In the churches and meetings of that Dominion he called men to the Kingdom of God with the utmost joy, and scattered such seeds which will be irrigated with the hand of divine power. Undoubtedly those seeds will grow, becoming green and verdant, and many rich harvests will be gathered. In the promotion of the divine principles he found no antagonist and no adversary. The believers he met in that city were in the utmost spirituality, and attracted with the fragrances of God. He found that through the effort of the maidservant of God* ***Mrs. Maxwell*** *a number of the sons and daughters of the Kingdom in that*

Dominion were gathered together and associated with each other, increasing this joyous exhilaration day by day. The time of sojourn was limited to a number of days, but the results in the future are inexhaustible. When a farmer comes into the possession of a virgin soil, in a short time he will bring under cultivation a large field. Therefore I hope that in the future Montreal may become so stirred, that the melody of the Kingdom may travel to all parts of the world from that Dominion and the breaths of the Holy Spirit may spread from that center to the East and the West of America.

O ye believers of God! ***Be not concerned with the smallness of your numbers, neither be oppressed by the multitude of an unbelieving world. **Five grains of wheat will be endued with heavenly blessing, whereas a thousand tons of tares will yield no results or effect. One fruitful tree will be conducive to the life of society, whereas a thousand forests of wild trees offer no fruits. The plain is covered with pebbles, but precious stones are rare. One pearl is better than a thousand wildernesses of sand, especially this pearl of great price, which is endowed with divine blessing. Erelong thousands of other pearls will be born from it. When that pearl associates and becomes the intimate of the pebbles, they also all change into pearls.***

Again I repeat that the future of Canada, whether from a material or a spiritual standpoint, is very great. Day by day civilization and freedom shall increase. The clouds of the Kingdom will water the seeds of guidance which have been sown there. ***Consequently, rest ye not, seek ye no composure, attach not yourselves to the luxuries of this ephemeral world, free yourselves from every attachment, and strive with heart and soul to become fully established in the Kingdom of God. Gain ye the heavenly treasures.*** *Day by day become ye more illumined. Draw ye nearer and nearer unto the threshold of oneness. Become ye the manifestors of spiritual favors and the dawning-places of infinite lights! If it is possible,* ***send ye teachers to other portions of Canada; likewise, dispatch ye teachers to Greenland and the home of the Eskimos.***

As regards the teachers, they must completely divest themselves from the old garments and be invested with a new garment. According to the statement of Christ, they must attain to the station of rebirth—that is, whereas in the first instance they were born from the womb of the mother, this time they must be

born from the womb of the world of nature. Just as they are now totally unaware of the experiences of the fetal world, they must also forget entirely the defects of the world of nature. They must be baptized with the water of life, the fire of the love of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit; be satisfied with little food, but take a large portion from the heavenly table. They must disengage themselves from temptation and covetousness, and be filled with the spirit. Through the effect of their pure breath, they must change the stone into the brilliant ruby and the shell into pearl. Like unto the cloud of vernal shower, they must transform the black soil into the rose garden and orchard. ***They must make the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the extinguished one enkindled and set aglow, and the dead quickened.***

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>
> *O Lord! Loose their tongues to make mention of Thee amongst Thy people, suffer them to speak forth Thy praise through Thy grace and loving-kindness, assist them with the cohorts of Thine angels, strengthen their loins in Thy service, and make them the signs of Thy guidance amongst Thy creatures.*
>
> *Verily, Thou art the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.*

The spreaders of the fragrances of God should recite this prayer every morning:

> *O GOD, my God! Thou beholdest this weak one begging for celestial strength, this poor one craving Thy heavenly treasures, this thirsty one longing for the fountain of eternal life, this afflicted one yearning for Thy promised healing through Thy boundless mercy which Thou hast destined for Thy chosen servants in Thy kingdom on high.*

> *O Lord! I have no helper save Thee, no shelter besides Thee, and no sustainer except Thee. Assist me with Thine angels to diffuse Thy holy fragrances and to spread abroad Thy teachings amongst the choicest of Thy people. 98*
>
> *O my Lord! Suffer me to be detached from aught else save Thee, to hold fast to the hem of Thy bounty, to be wholly devoted to Thy Faith, to remain fast and firm in Thy love and to observe what Thou hast prescribed in Thy Book.*
>
> *Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.*

1. *Qur'án 67:3.*

Comments

February 22. On this date 2011 Dale Husband posted a blog entry title "My Resignation from the Baha'i Faith."

Original file: 0086.html (position #47)

February 22. On this date 2011 Dale Husband posted a blog entry title "My Resignation from the Baha'i Faith."

Bahá'í Faith
This card is the property of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States with whom rests final decision as to its validity.
If found return to:
Bahá'í National Center
Membership Office
1233 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201

Comments

February 22. On this date in 2009, the Universal House of Justice explained "why such terms as “Alla´h-u-Abha´” and “Ya´ Baha´’u’l-Abha´” are used by Baha´’i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues."

February 22. On this date in 2009, the Universal House of Justice explained "why such terms as “Alla´h-u-Abha´” and “Ya´ Baha´’u’l-Abha´” are used by Baha´’i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues."

> *19 May 2015*
>
> *Dear Baha´’i´ Friend,*
>
> *Your email letter of 10 March 2015, asking on behalf of a fellow believer whether it is appropriate to translate the phrase “Alla´h-u-Abha´” into another language for purposes of its recitation 95 times a day, has been received at the Baha´’i´ World Centre and forwarded to our Office for reply. The following has been*

provided in response to a similar query posed to the Universal House of Justice on a previous occasion:

> *The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 29 December 2008, asking why such terms as "Alla´h-u-Abha´" and "Ya´ Baha´'u'l-Abha´" are used by Baha´i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues, and has asked us to respond as follows.*
>
> *The House of Justice on another occasion has clarified that the Greatest Name is to be used in its original language for the recitation of "Alla´h-u-Abha´" 95 times a day, as well as for its use in the Long Obligatory Prayer and the Prayer for the Dead. It has also clarified that to translate words such as "Alla´h-u-Abha´", "Ya´ Baha´'u'l-Abha´", "Mashriqu'l-Adhka´r" and "Hazi´ratu'l-Quds" into one's native language is not acceptable. One exception to this is the alternative use of the words "Right of God" or their equivalent into other languages while the term "Huqu´qu'lla´h" gradually becomes a part of Baha´i´ vocabulary.*
>
> *In general, one should bear in mind that all translations are, to some degree, inadequate. For instance, the beloved Guardian has pointed out in ... God Passes By that the word "Baha´" signifies at once the "Glory", the "Splendour" and the "Light" of God; there is no single word in English which can express all these. It is, of course, desirable that there be no loss of meaning through translation; thus, it is preferable that certain terms directly related to the Manifestation of God remain in their original form.*
>
> *(From a letter dated 22 February 2009 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)*

With loving Baha´i´ greetings,

Office of Correspondence

On February 1, 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and

publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

> *Persian translation of Arabic verses*
>
> *Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Transmitted by email*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friend,*
>
> *1 February 2018*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 7 November 2014 about the translation of the Arabic Writings into Persian. It has considered your questions regarding this matter and has instructed us to write to you as follows. The delay in doing so is deeply regretted.*
>
> ***That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted.*** *In his letters to believers in Iran, Shoghi Effendi also exhorted the friends to recite the Obligatory Prayers in Arabic. However, drawing upon an individual's translation of these Prayers or other Tablets in order to aid one's understanding is, of course, permissible, although such personal translations should not be recited in Bahá'í gatherings. No issue should be made of what individuals do in private prayer.*
>
> *Latitude has likewise been given to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others — for instance, in the context of a study group. Further, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.*
>
> *In light of a number of factors, Tajik and Persian are for practical purposes treated differently.*

> *It is hoped that the above information will be of assistance. You may rest assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

Comments

February 22. On this date in 1948, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum entered this item into her diary: "We know Bahá'u'lláh will watch over us. But being human we have our moments of anxiety...then we just know it's up to Bahá'u'lláh..."

Original file: 0084.html (position #45)

February 22. On this date in 1948, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum entered this item into her diary, as recorded in Chapter 9, titled *"War"*, of her book, *"The Priceless Pearl"*: "We know Bahá'u'lláh will watch over us. But being human we have our moments of anxiety, such as when shooting flares up all over town and the beloved Guardian has not yet come down from the Shrines, and the road is closed, and he has to come home on foot - then we just know it's up to Bahá'u'lláh...it is no exaggeration to say a night without shooting just isn't any more. Sometimes it goes on, off and on, all night. But you soon sleep through it except for a bomb..."

Comments

February 22. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Indeed when we see the increasing darkness in the world today we can fully realize that unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches into the hearts of men and transforms them, there can be no peace and no spiritual progress in the future."

Original file: 0083.html (position #44)

February 22. On this date in 1945, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "Indeed when we see the increasing darkness in the world today we can fully realize that unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches into the hearts of men and transforms them, there can be no peace and no spiritual progress in the future."

> *1413. Unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh Reaches into the Hearts of Men and*

Transforms Them, There Can Be No Peace

"Indeed when we see the increasing darkness in the world today we can fully realize that unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches into the hearts of men and transforms them, there can be no peace and no spiritual progress in the future.

"His constant hope is that the believers will conduct themselves, individually and in their Bahá'í Community life, in such a manner as to attract the attention of others to the Cause. The world is not only starving for lofty principles and ideals, it is, above all, starving for a shining example which the Bahá'ís can and must provide."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 22, 1945)

Comments

February 22. On this date in 1847, Thornton Chase was born. Chase converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1894 after attending lessons taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in Chicago. Although not the first Bahá'í convert chronologically, Thornton Chase was the first the remain a Bahá'í and is ...

Original file: 0082.html (position #43)

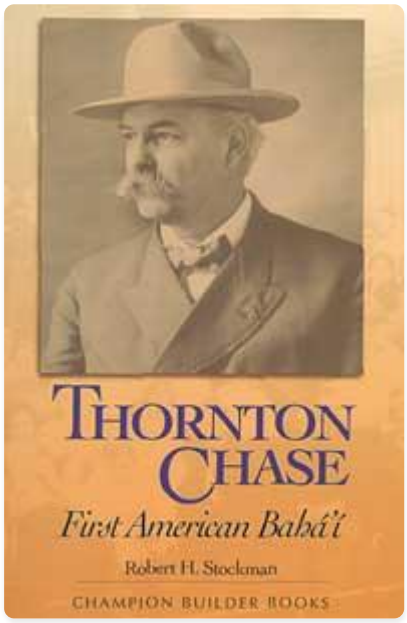
February 22. On this date in 1847, Thornton Chase was born.

Chase converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1894 after attending lessons taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in Chicago. Although not the first Bahá'í convert chronologically, Thornton Chase was the first the remain a Bahá'í and is therefore often referred to as the first American convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

In 1898, Kheiralla undertook a Bahá'í pilgrimage to Palestine to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with other American pilgrims, including Phoebe Hearst, Lua Getsinger and May Boles. In Akka, Kheiralla witnessed first hand the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers. Ultimately, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

Chase was able to go on pilgrimage in 1907, by which time he had emerged as the principal organizer of the Chicago Bahá'í community until moving out of Chicago in 1909.

Thornton Chase died on September 30, 1912 in Los Angeles, of complications following unsuccessful surgery. 'Abdu'l Bahá was on a train en route to California at the time and went to visit Chase's grave on arrival. There he praised Chase's qualities highly, instructed the Bahá'ís to hold a commemoration of Chase annually at his grave, and encouraged Bahá'ís to visit the gravesite. The Los Angeles Bahá'í community continues to hold an annual graveside commemoration.



Comments

February 23. On this date in 1940, Sadhij Nassar, Bahá′u'lláh's granddaughter through his son Badí'ullah, was released after having been the the first woman arrested under the British Defense Emergency Regulations. Shoghi Effendi accused her of "ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism."

February 23. On this date in 1940, Sadhij Nassar, Bahá′u'lláh's granddaughter through his son Badí'ullah, was released after having been the the first woman arrested under the British Defense Emergency Regulations. She had been held without charge. Shoghi Effendi accused her of "ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism."

THE SPIRITUAL POTENCIES OF THAT CONSECRATED SPOT

The transfer of the sacred remains of the brother and mother of our Lord and Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel and their final interment within the hallowed precincts of the Shrine of the Báb, and in the immediate neighborhood of the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, constitute, apart from their historic associations and the tender sentiments they arouse, events of such capital institutional significance as only future happenings, steadily and mysteriously unfolding at the world center of our Faith, can adequately demonstrate.

The circumstances attending the consummation of this long, this profoundly cherished hope were no less significant. The swiftness and suddenness with which so delicate and weighty an undertaking was conducted; the surmounting of various obstacles which the outbreak of war and its inevitable repercussions necessarily engendered; the success of the long-drawn out negotiations which the solution of certain preliminary problems imposed; the execution of the plan in the face of the continued instability and persistent dangers following the fierce riots that so long and so violently rocked the Holy Land, and despite the smoldering fire of animosity kindled in the breasts of ecclesiastics and Covenant-breakers alike--all combined to demonstrate, afresh and with compelling power, the invincible might of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Purest Branch, the martyred son, the companion, and amanuensis of Bahá'u'lláh, that pious and holy youth, who in the darkest days of Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the barracks of 'Akká entreated, on his death-bed, his Father to accept him as a ransom for those of His loved ones who yearned for, but were unable to attain, His presence, and the saintly mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, surnamed Navvab by Bahá'u'lláh, and the first recipient of the honored and familiar title of "the Most Exalted Leaf," separated in death above half a century, and forced to suffer the humiliation of an alien burial-ground, are now at long last reunited with the Greatest Holy Leaf with whom they had so abundantly shared the tribulations of one of the most distressing episodes of the Heroic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Avenged, eternally safeguarded, befittingly glorified, they repose embosomed in the heart of Carmel, hidden beneath its sacred soil, interred in one single spot, lying beneath the shadow of the twin holy Tombs, and facing across the bay, on an eminence of unequalled loveliness and beauty, the silver-city of 'Akká, the Point of Adoration of the entire Bahá'í world, and the Door of Hope for all mankind. "Haste thee, O Carmel!" thus proclaims the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, "for lo, the light of the

countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee." "Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the day-spring of the evidences of His Revelation."

*The machinations of Badí'ullah--the brother and lieutenant of the Focal Center of sedition and Arch-Breaker of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, the deceased Muhammad-'Ali--who with uncommon temerity and exceptional vigor addressed his written protest to the civil authorities, claiming the right to oppose the projected transfer of the remains of the mother and brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have been utterly frustrated. So foolish a claim, advanced by one who in the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá has been denounced as an "alert and active worker of mischief," and whose life has been marked by so many instances of extravagance, of betrayal and folly, has been summarily rejected by the fairness and justice of the civil authorities, in whose custody the notorious Sadhíj **[1]**, the daughter of that same Badí'ullah, is still retained, as a direct result of her ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism, and whose acts constitute a clear and double violation of the civil law of the land and of the spiritual ordinances of Bahá'u'lláh, in Whose Faith she professes to believe.*

Unabashed by his appalling mistakes and blunders; undeterred by the galling failure of his persistent efforts, in conjunction with his brother, to establish, in the days following the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, their alleged right to the custody of the Most Holy Tomb; unrestrained by the memory of the abortive attempt of Muhammad-'Ali to retain the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh as a private residence for himself and his family; unchastened by the spiritual and material misery into which he and his kindred have sunk; and impotent to perceive the contrast between that misery and the consolidating strength and ever-enhancing prestige of the institutions heralding the birth of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh at its international center, he has, with characteristic insolence, dared to raise once again his voice against the resistless march of events that are steadily accelerating the expansion and establishment of the Faith in the Holy Land.

For it must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb's overshadowing Sepulchre, and in the vicinity of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, which will be reared on its

flank, is destined to evolve into the focal center of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh and anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship&oldid=745828715) and the Universal House of Justice. Then, and then only, will this momentous prophecy which illuminates the concluding passages of the Tablet of Carmel be fulfilled: "Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee (Carmel), and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names."

To attempt to visualize, even in its barest outline, the glory that must envelop these institutions, to essay even a tentative and partial description of their character or the manner of their operation, or to trace however inadequately the course of events leading to their rise and eventual establishment is far beyond my own capacity and power. Suffice it to say that at this troubled stage in world history the association of these three incomparably precious souls who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Center, is in itself an event which will release forces that are bound to hasten the emergence in a land which, geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet, of some of the brightest gems of that World Order now shaping in the womb of this travailing age.

For such as might undertake, in the days to come, the meritorious and highly enviable pilgrimage to these blessed shrines, as well as for the benefit of the less privileged who, aware of the greatness of their virtue and the pre-eminence of their lineage, desire to commune with their spirits, and to strive to acquire an added insight into the glory of their position, and to follow in their footsteps, let these testimonies written by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá be their inspiration and guidance in their noble quest:

"At this very moment," Bahá'u'lláh testifies, "My son is being washed before My face, after Our having sacrificed him in the Most Great Prison. Thereat have the dwellers of the Abhá Tabernacle wept with a great weeping, and such as have suffered imprisonment with this Youth in the path of God, the Lord of the promised Day, lamented. Under such conditions My Pen hath not been prevented from remembering its Lord, the Lord of all nations. It summoneth the people unto God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. This is the day whereon he that was created by the

light of Bahá has suffered martyrdom, at a time when he lay imprisoned at the hands of his enemies."

"Upon thee, O Branch of God!" He solemnly and most touchingly, in that same Tablet, bestows upon him His benediction, "be the remembrance of God and His praise, and the praise of all that dwell in the Realm of Immortality, and of all the denizens of the Kingdom of Names. Happy art thou in that thou hast been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, until Thou didst sacrifice thyself before the face of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Thou, in truth, hast been wronged, and to this testifieth the Beauty of Him, the Self-Subsisting. Thou didst, in the first days of thy life, bear that which hath caused all things to groan, and made every pillar to tremble. Happy is the one that remembereth thee, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Creator of the Morn."

"Glorified art Thou, O Lord, my God!" He, in a prayer, astoundingly proclaims, "Thou seest me in the hands of Mine enemies, and My son bloodstained before Thy face, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all names. I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united."

"Blessed art thou," He, in another Tablet affirms, "and blessed he that turneth unto thee, and visiteth thy grave, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Lord of all that was and shall be.... I testify that thou didst return in meekness unto thine abode. Great is thy blessedness and the blessedness of them that hold fast unto the hem of thy outspread robe.... Thou art, verily, the trust of God and His treasure in this land. Erelong will God reveal through thee that which He hath desired. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. When thou wast laid to rest in the earth, the earth itself trembled in its longing to meet thee. Thus hath it been decreed, and yet the people perceive not.... Were We to recount the mysteries of thine ascension, they that are asleep would waken, and all beings would be set ablaze with the fire of the remembrance of My Name, the Mighty, the Loving."

Concerning the Most Exalted Leaf, *the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh has written: "The first Spirit through which all spirits were revealed, and the first Light by which all lights shone forth, rest upon thee, O Most Exalted Leaf, thou who hast been mentioned in the Crimson Book! Thou art the one whom God created to arise and serve His own Self, and the Manifestation of His Cause, and the Day-Spring of His Revelation, and the Dawning-Place of His signs, and the Source of His commandments; and Who so aided thee that thou didst turn with*

thy whole being unto Him, at a time when His servants and handmaidens had turned away from His Face. ...Happy art thou, O My handmaiden, and My Leaf, and the one mentioned in My Book, and inscribed by My Pen of Glory in My Scrolls and Tablets. ...Rejoice thou, at this moment, in the most exalted Station and the All-highest Paradise, and the Abhá Horizon, inasmuch as He Who is the Lord of Names hath remembered thee. We bear witness that thou didst attain unto all good, and that God hath so exalted thee, that all honor and glory circled around thee."

"O Navvab!" He thus, in another Tablet, addresses her, "O Leaf that hath sprung from My Tree, and been My companion! My glory be upon thee, and My loving-kindness, and My mercy that hath surpassed all beings. We announce unto thee that which will gladden thine eye, and assure thy soul, and rejoice thine heart. Verily, thy Lord is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. God hath been and will be pleased with thee, and hath singled thee out for His own Self, and chosen thee from among His handmaidens to serve Him, and hath made thee the companion of His Person in the day-time and in the night-season."

"Hear thou Me once again," He reassures her, "God is well-pleased with thee, as a token of His grace and a sign of His mercy. He hath made thee to be His companion in every one of His worlds, and hath nourished thee with His meeting and presence, so long as His Name, and His Remembrance, and His Kingdom, and His Empire shall endure. Happy is the handmaid that hath mentioned thee, and sought thy good-pleasure, and humbled herself before thee, and held fast unto the cord of thy love. Woe betide him that denieth thy exalted station, and the things ordained for thee from God, the Lord of all names, and him that hath turned away from thee, and rejected thy station before God, the Lord of the mighty throne."

"O faithful ones!" Bahá'u'lláh specifically enjoins, "Should ye visit the resting-place of the Most Exalted Leaf, who hath ascended unto the Glorious Companion, stand ye and say: 'Salutation and blessing and glory upon thee, O Holy Leaf that hath sprung from the Divine Lote-Tree! I bear witness that thou hast believed in God and in His signs, and answered His Call, and turned unto Him, and held fast unto His cord, and clung to the hem of His grace, and fled thy home in His path, and chosen to live as a stranger, out of love for His presence and in thy longing to serve Him. May God have mercy upon him that draweth nigh unto thee, and remembereth thee through the things which My Pen hath voiced in this, the most great station. We pray God that He may forgive us, and forgive them that have

> *turned unto thee, and grant their desires, and bestow upon them, through His wondrous grace, whatever be their wish. He, verily, is the Bountiful, the Generous. Praise be to God, He Who is the Desire of all worlds; and the Beloved of all who recognize Him."*
>
> *And, finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself in one of His remarkably significant Tablets, has borne witness not only to the exalted station of one whose "seed shall inherit the Gentiles," whose Husband is the Lord of Hosts, but also to the sufferings endured by her who was His beloved mother. "As to thy question concerning the 54th chapter of Isaiah," He writes, "This chapter refers to the Most Exalted Leaf, the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As a proof of this it is said: `For more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife.' Reflect upon this statement, and then upon the following: 'And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.' And truly the humiliation and reproach which she suffered in the path of God is a fact which no one can refute. For the calamities and afflictions mentioned in the whole chapter are such afflictions which she suffered in the path of God, all of which she endured with patience and thanked God therefor and praised Him, because He had enabled her to endure afflictions for the sake of Bahá. During all this time, the men and women (Covenant-breakers) persecuted her in an incomparable manner, while she was patient, God-fearing, calm, humble and contented through the favor of her Lord and by the bounty of her Creator."*
>
> *December 21, 1939*

[1] From the entry titled "Sadhij Nassar" on "Palestinian Journeys"...

Sadhij Nassar was born in Haifa. Her father, an Iranian by origin, was Shaykh Badi‘ullah Baha’i from Acre. She and her husband, Najib Nassar, had a son, Faruq. She studied at the Sisters of Nazareth School in Haifa and graduated from it.

Her professional life began in 1923 when she started writing articles in the *al-Karmel* newspaper founded in Haifa in 1908 by her husband Najib Nassar. She later helped him edit and run that newspaper.

In 1926 she began a section in that newspaper called “The Women’s Section,” which dealt with social issues; both men and women wrote articles for that section. In 1932, she ran two sections in that newspaper, one devoted to women’s issues and the other to social topics.

Sadhij Nassar's articles about women were distinguished by their libertarian spirit. She encouraged Palestinian mothers to raise their children on the basis of equality between boys and girls, called for educating the Palestinian woman and providing her with work opportunities, and attacked dominant social ills in society. She also encouraged Palestinian women to engage in political life and to contribute to resisting British and Zionist colonialism.

In addition to her journalistic work, Nassar played a role in mobilizing and organizing Palestinian women. In 1930, and in collaboration with Mariam al-Khalil, she co-founded the Society of the Arab Women's Union in Haifa, which played a prominent role in the General Strike of 1936. She also took part in the women's demonstrations that accompanied that strike. Nassar was among the first to recognize the importance of organizing rural women and in getting them to join the national struggle. She worked hard to organize the women farmers of the Baysan district (among whom she lived for some time). Her efforts in this regard, however, proved unsuccessful.

Sadhij Nassar participated in several Arab women's conferences and was a member of the Palestinian women's delegation to the Eastern Women's Congress for Palestine held in Cairo in the middle of October 1938, at the invitation of Huda Sha'rawi, the pioneer Arab feminist. At that conference, Nassar was elected secretary of the conference bureau. The conference called for an end to the British Mandate and the formation of a constitutional and sovereign state in Palestine, linked by treaty to Britain (as were Egypt and Iraq). She also took part in the General Congress of Arab Women called for by the Union of Egyptian Women and held at the Cairo Opera House in 1944. She delivered a speech at that conference urging the Arabs to work actively to save Palestine before it was too late.

Sadhij Nassar was the first Palestinian woman to be arrested by the British Mandate authorities because of her nationalist activities. The British arrested her in late 1938 and charged her with supplying arms to the Palestinian rebels, describing her as a "very dangerous woman" and a "prominent agitator." She was held at the Bethlehem detention camp for eleven months. A wide local and international campaign was mounted to demand her release; her husband wrote her a letter in which he stated that if he did not make it into the pages of history because of his newspaper *al-Karmel,* he would surely make it because of her.

Nassar continued her editorial and administrative work in al-Karmel. The British Mandate authorities closed the newspaper several times, but in 1944 they invoked the emergency regulations then prevalent in Palestine and sealed its premises permanently.

Following the Palestine disaster of 1948, Sadhij Nassar sought refuge in Lebanon, where she published a series of articles in the newspaper *al-Yawm* about the tragedy of Palestine and the deterioration of conditions in it. After moving to Syria, she published her articles in Syrian newspapers such as *al-Qabas*.

Sadhij Nassar was a dedicated and firm nationalist and a prominent and unwavering feminist activist. She was among the first Palestinian women who were active in the field of politics and nationalist organization as well as journalism. She was highly cultured and was proficient in four languages.

She died in Damascus and was buried there.

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Comments

February 23. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...what is truly authoritative are the words of the Master. In all such cases we should try and find out what He has said and abide by His words, even though they seem in conflict with the findings of modern scholars."

February 23. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...what is truly authoritative are the words of the Master. In all such cases we should try and find out what He has said and abide by His words, even though they seem in conflict with the findings of modern scholars."

Original file: 0080.html (position #41)

> *1620. When the Interpreter of the Writings Says Nothing on a Subject Then the Individual is Free to Accept or Refute*
>
> *"As regards what Mirza Abu'l Fazl has said concerning the Seven Religions of the*

past, Shoghi Effendi wishes to emphasize that what is truly authoritative are the words of the Master. In all such cases we should try and find out what He has said and abide by His words, even though they seem in conflict with the findings of modern scholars. If He does not say anything on the subject, then the individual is free to accept, or refute what scholars, such as Abu'l Fazl, say. Through the discussion of these (statements by scholars), the truth will ultimately be found, but at no time should their decision be considered as final."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 23, 1933: On Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism and Related Subjects, A Compilation from the Universal House of Justice, p. 1)

Comments

February 23. On this date in 1975, Ramona Allen Brown died in La Jolla, California. In 1904 she converted to the Bahá'í Faith and in 1954 made a Bahá'í pilgrimage during which Shoghi Effendi told her "Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home."

Original file: 0079.html (position #40)

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town, and every village will have a [Bahá'í] Temple and a House of Justice in the future"; and **"It is essential that the youth of today study deeply the Faith as they will usher in the Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace will be established within this century. The Most Great Peace in the next century"**

> *One evening Shoghi Effendi said,* ***"Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home." This I have tried to do ever since, and following are some of the important and interesting things which he said to us while we were his guests in Haifa:***
>
> *Bahá'ís must have a new way of life. They need to be different from other people. They must be distinguished. The more distinguished, the more they will attract people. The greater the distinction, the greater the attraction. They must read the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, study the text of the Teachings.* ***It is not enough to be good and kind and to lead a religious life today; it does not count for much unless one accepts the Manifestation of God, if one has heard of Him; it is almost wasted. One must accept the Manifestation in His day.*** *If one has not heard of Bahá'u'lláh, they are not to be blame; the blame lies with the Bahá'ís. If the Bahá'ís fail to teach the Faith, the people who do not hear of the Faith are not to blame. The blame lies with the Bahá'ís.*
>
> ***All men are not of the same capacity. To serve to full capacity is meritorious with God. God judges men by how they use their capacity.***
>
> ***Every city, every town, and every village will have a [Bahá'í] Temple and a House of Justice in the future.***
>
> ***There are three processes in teaching: the first is to attract the people; the second is to convert the people; and the third is to be consecrated. There must be attraction, conversion, and consecration.*** *The teachers must not be unwise. There are three Charters to be used: (1) the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, or the Divine Plan; (2) the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with the plan for world administration; and (3) the Tablet of Carmel, the Charter for the development for the World Center of the Faith. the Tablet of Carmel is the symbol of the House of Justice. The Ark is the symbol of the Administrative body.* ***The higher cave of Elijah is the real one where Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Tablet of Carmel in such a loud voice that the priests heard it.***

It is essential that the youth of today study deeply the Faith as they will usher in the Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace will be established within this century. The Most Great Peace in the next century. *The Global Crusade will establish the Bahá'í Faith the world over but will not have a direct influence in establishing the United States of the World. The first period will be that of suffering and cleansing; the second period will be that of unification; and the third, the establishment of the Bahá'í World Faith. After the International State is established and wars cease, the money now being expended for destruction and war will be used for education and science, and a method will be discovered for interplanetary communication, even interplanetary conferences. The time will come when people can cross the entire nation in one hour and eventually beyond the continent into interplanetary travel.* ***The cycle of six thousand years of city building has come to an end, and now we will have a new pattern starting with villages, etc. Material civilization is becoming like the ancient city of Babylon, and it must be destroyed.***

The young people must disperse far away, the old ones to outlying places; they must settle goal cities. Sell your property and pioneer!...The young people of America should go out into the country on farms and work with their hands and produce food for their families.

Americans are exposed to great dangers. *Today the power of America is in the hands of the masses. There is a terrific power in the press, and the people are swayed by it. The United States, on a national scale, sets the pattern for an international pattern...* ***There will be a world civil war followed by the establishment of a world state; all the nations will be part of it and will have to conform to it. This war has already started in Korea. Mankind cannot be purified and cleansed without suffering... It is positively dangerous to live in cities. The cities are doomed. They will evaporate... The Bahá'ís must disperse from the cities...why do they not disperse? If they do not respond and disperse, they will suffer spiritually, materially, and physically...In America the destruction will be great!... They must disperse for their own protection. the cities are doomed: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles. They must flee from the United States because America will become the storm center of the future.... Buy property in Central Africa! Those with independent means must pack up and go.... Those with spirit must***

pack up and go.... There must be a mass response... I can warn them, but I cannot make them go.... The Cause will triumph in spite of the actions and inactivity of the believers. *If one country falls down, another will make up for it. The Bahá'ís have been given the method. Now they must have the spirit. It is hopeless for capable teachers in the cities (the people will not listen).... The friends are calculating too much, and there is too much emphasis on nonessentials.*

People are flocking to churches through fear. Americans must have a totally new way of life, become a race of wholly devoted souls, devoted to God and His ways. They must get to a simpler way of life. The standards of America must be lowered, have fewer luxuries.... Americans do not have enough belief in God, not enough detachment. They must be more spiritual, disencumber themselves from things, have Bahá'í standards, not American standards. Americans are too materialistic, too mechanized, too attached to family, health, and death. There must be less materialism, less intellectualism, and more spirit... ***America is the most disturbed nation, politically, on earth... There is too much organization in America and too little spirit.***

Joseph smith was a seer, not a Prophet of God, neither major nor minor Prophet. He had a high standard... but the Bahá'ís have a higher standard coupled with God's power that comes direct from God. for this age.

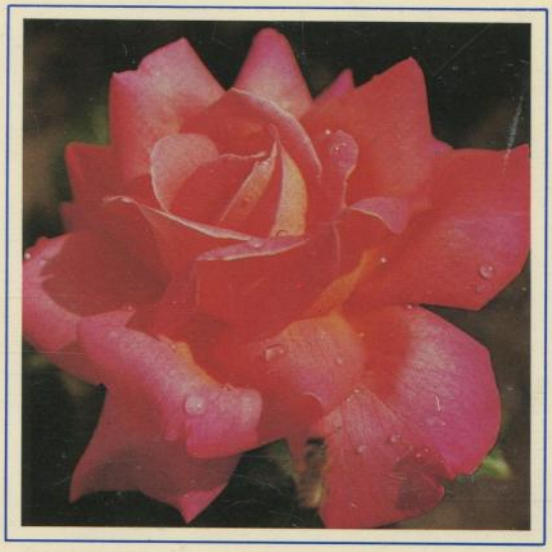
We must encourage the marriage of blacks and whites*...Bahá'u'lláh was sent to bring about world unity, and world unity is the cornerstone of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.*

It is not enough to go pioneering; one must start immediately teaching the Faith... For pioneers to leave their posts means the next to arrive will have to go through the difficulties all over again, and it will be twice as difficult for them... As soon as the community is strong enough, one should leave and pioneer elsewhere.

The new race will be wholly devoted souls.

Memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Recollections of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith in California



RAMONA ALLEN BROWN

Comments

February 23. On this date in 1924, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter "To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America," later published in "Bahá'í Administration," addressing such issues as "The Plight of Mankind" and "The New World Order."

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> ***Letter 19*** *To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America. My dear fellow-workers:*

I gather from various sources that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in the course of its sure yet toilsome march towards the salvation of the world, has encountered of late further obstacles, which in the eyes of some appear to retard its progress and hinder its growth. I have learned with feelings of sadness and surprise that some vague sense of apprehension, a strange misconception of its immediate purpose and methods, is slowly gaining ground, steadily affecting its wholesome growth and vigorous development throughout the continent.

Though such signs should appear from time to time, and however unrepresentative they be of the vast and growing mass of its convinced and zealous supporters, the world over, what, I wonder, could have caused this uneasiness of mind? Are such misgivings possible, though on the part of but a few, in the face of the remarkable manifestations of so remarkable a movement? To what extent do they form a part of those mental tests and trials destined at various times by the Almighty to stir and reinvigorate the body of His Cause, and how far are they traceable to our imperfect state of understanding, to our weaknesses and failings?

Divine Destiny and Human Frailty

That the Cause of God should, in the days to come, witness many a challenging hour and pass through critical stages in preparation for the glories of its promised ascendancy in the new world has been, time and again, undeniably affirmed by our departed Master, and is abundantly proved to us all by its heroic past and turbulent history. And yet, if it is the lot of the chosen ones of God, the people of Bahá, to face adversity and suffer tribulation before achieving ultimate victory, are we to believe that whatever befalls us is divinely ordained, and in no wise the result of our faint-heartedness and negligence?

Surely now, if ever, is the time to turn our eyes inwardly, to bestir ourselves, to invoke the Most Great Name, and standing together, summon to our aid and support all the faith, the strength, and the courage that we shall need to meet our pressing obligations and discharge our trust.

The Plight of Mankind

The plight of mankind, the condition and circumstances under which we live and labor are truly disheartening, and the darkness of prejudice and ill-will enough to chill the stoutest heart. Disillusion and dismay are invading the hearts of peoples

and nations, and the hope and vision of a united and regenerated humanity is growing dimmer and dimmer every day. Time-honored institutions, cherished ideals, and sacred traditions are suffering in these days of bewildering change, from the effects of the gravest onslaught, and the precious fruit of centuries of patient and earnest labor is faced with peril. Passions, supposed to have been curbed and subdued, are now burning fiercer than ever before, and the voice of peace and good-will seems drowned amid unceasing convulsions and turmoil. What, let us ask ourselves, should be our attitude as we stand under the all-seeing eye of our vigilant Master, gazing at a sad spectacle so utterly remote from the spirit which He breathed into the world? Are we to follow in the wake of the wayward and the despairing? Are we to allow our vision of so unique, so enduring, so precious a Cause to be clouded by the stain and dust of worldly happenings, which, no matter how glittering and far-reaching in their immediate effects, are but the fleeting shadows of an imperfect world? Are we to be carried away by the flood of hollow and conflicting ideas, or are we to stand, unsubdued and unblemished, upon the everlasting rock of God's Divine Instructions? Shall we not equip ourselves with a clear and full understanding of their purpose and implications for the age we live in, and with an unconquerable resolve arise to utilize them, intelligently and with scrupulous fidelity, for the enlightenment and the promotion of the good of all mankind?

Humanity, torn with dissension and burning with hate, is crying at this hour for a fuller measure of that love which is born of God, that love which in the last resort will prove the one solvent of its incalculable difficulties and problems. Is it not incumbent upon us, whose hearts are aglow with love for Him, to make still greater effort, to manifest that love in all its purity and power in our dealings with our fellow-men? May our love of our beloved Master, so ardent, so disinterested in all its aspects, find its true expression in love for our fellow-brethren and sisters in the faith as well as for all mankind. I assure you, dear friends, that progress in such matters as these is limitless and infinite, and that upon the extent of our achievements along this line will ultimately depend the success of our mission in life.

The New World Order

And as we make an effort to demonstrate that love to the world may we also clear our minds of any lingering trace of unhappy misunderstandings that might obscure our clear conception of the exact purpose and methods of this new world order, so

challenging and complex, yet so consummate and wise. We are called upon by our beloved Master in His Will and Testament not only to adopt it unreservedly, but to unveil its merit to all the world. To attempt to estimate its full value, and grasp its exact significance after so short a time since its inception would be premature and presumptuous on our part. We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications. But one word of warning must be uttered in this connection. Let us be on our guard lest we measure too strictly the Divine Plan with the standard of men. I am not prepared to state that it agrees in principle or in method with the prevailing notions now uppermost in men's minds, nor that it should conform with those imperfect, precarious, and expedient measures feverishly resorted to by agitated humanity. Are we to doubt that the ways of God are not necessarily the ways of man? Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, whole-hearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? If we are to falter or hesitate, if our love for Him should fail to direct us and keep us within His path, if we desert Divine and emphatic principles, what hope can we any more cherish for healing the ills and sicknesses of this world? Pending the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, whose function it is to lay more definitely the broad lines that must guide the future activities and administration of the Movement, it is clearly our duty to strive to obtain as clear a view as possible of the manner in which to conduct the affairs of the Cause, and then arise with single-mindedness and determination to adopt and maintain it in all our activities and labors.

The Foundation of the House of Justice

The various Assemblies, local and national, constitute today the bedrock upon the strength of which the Universal House is in future to be firmly established and raised. Not until these function vigorously and harmoniously can the hope for the termination of this period of transition be realized. It devolves upon us whose dearest wish is to see the Cause enter upon that promised era of universal recognition and world achievements, to do all in our power to consolidate the foundations of these Assemblies, promoting at the same time a fuller understanding of their purpose and more harmonious cooperation for their maintenance and success.

Let us also remember that at the very root of the Cause lies the principle of the undoubted right of the individual to self-expression, his freedom to declare his conscience and set forth his views. If certain instructions of the Master are today particularly emphasized and scrupulously adhered to, let us be sure that they are but provisional measures designed to guard and protect the Cause in its present state of infancy and growth until the day when this tender and precious plant shall have sufficiently grown to be able to withstand the unwisdom of its friends and the attacks of its enemies.

Let us also bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other.

Duties of Elected Representatives

The duties of those whom the friends have freely and conscientiously elected as their representatives are no less vital and binding than the obligations of those who have chosen them. Their function is not to dictate, but to consult, and consult not only among themselves, but as much as possible with the friends whom they represent. They must regard themselves in no other light but that of chosen instruments for a more efficient and dignified presentation of the Cause of God. They should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should approach their task with extreme humility, and endeavor, by their open-mindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candor, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win, not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they serve, but also their esteem and real affection. They must, at all times, avoid the spirit of exclusiveness, the atmosphere of secrecy, free themselves from a domineering attitude, and banish all forms of prejudice and passion from their deliberations. They should, within the limits of wise discretion, take the friends into their confidence, acquaint them with their plans, share with them their problems and anxieties, and seek their advice and counsel. And, when they are called upon to arrive at a certain decision, they should, after dispassionate, anxious and cordial

consultation, turn to God in prayer, and with earnestness and conviction and courage record their vote and abide by the voice of the majority, which we are told by our Master to be the voice of truth, never to be challenged, and always to be whole-heartedly enforced. To this voice the friends must heartily respond, and regard it as the only means that can insure the protection and advancement of the Cause.

Election of Delegates

Again I earnestly appeal to every one of you, and renew my only request with all the ardor of my conviction, to make, before and during the coming Convention, yet another effort, this time more spontaneous and selfless than before, and endeavor to approach your task--the election of your delegates, as well as your national and local representatives--with that purity of spirit that can alone obtain our Beloved's most cherished desire. Let us recall His explicit and often-repeated assurances that every Assembly elected in that rarefied atmosphere of selflessness and detachment is, in truth, appointed of God, that its verdict is truly inspired, that one and all should submit to its decision unreservedly and with cheerfulness.

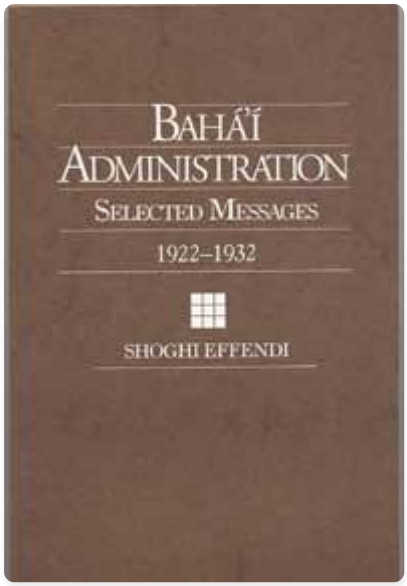
Let us first strive to fulfill these conditions, difficult yet essential, in our lives, so that, contented and assured, we may make of this new year of activity a year of abundant blessings, of unprecedented achievements.

May this dearest wish be fulfilled!

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

February 23, 1924.


BAHÁ'Í
ADMINISTRATION
SELECTED MESSAGES
1922–1932
SHOGHI EFFENDI

Comments

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On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement, proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say

less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

On January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*. As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory

While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:

> *Dear Mr. Rabbani,*
>
> *I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.*
>
> *Yours sincerely,*
>
> *Herbert Samuel*

On December 16, 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí.

The transaction is described in Baha'i News, no. 244, June 1951, p. 4

> ***Masra'ih is a Moslem religious endowment, and it is consequently impossible, under existing laws in this country, for it to be sold. However, as the friends are aware, the Ministry of Religions, due to the direct intervention of the Minister himself, Rabbi Maimon, consented, in the face of considerable opposition, to deliver Masra'ih to the Baha'is as a Holy Place to be visited by Baha'i pilgrims. This means that we rent it from the Department of Moslem and Druze affairs in the Ministry of Religions. The head of this Department is also a Rabbi, Dr. Hirschberg. Recently he, his wife and party, visited all the Baha'i properties in Haifa and 'Akka, following upon a very pleasant tea party in the Western Pilgrim House with the members of the International Baha'i Council.***

The mansion at Mazra'a would later be purchased by the Bahá'í Administrative Order from the Israeli government as reported in Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968-1973, published 1976; Ridván Message 1973, p. 119

> *The Mansion of Mazra'ih, often referred to by the beloved Guardian as one of the "twin mansions" in which the Blessed Beauty resided after nine years within the walled prison-city of 'Akká, and dear to the hearts of the believers by reason of its associations with their Lord, has at last been purchased together with 24,000 square meters of land extending into the plain on its eastward side.*

On November 12, 1952, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi announced the "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and the area around it from "the Development Authority of the State of Israel...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners."

> *Acquisition of Vitally-Needed Property*
>
> *Announce to Bahá'í communities, East and West, on the joyous occasion of the hundred and thirty-fifth Anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's Birthday, the successful termination of the protracted negotiations, initiated two years ago and culminating in the signature to the contract providing* ***the eventual, formal***

transfer by the Development Authority of the State of Israel *to the Palestine Branch of the American National Spiritual Assembly of the* ***extensive, long-desired, vitally-needed property surrounding and safeguarding for posterity the Most Holy Tomb of the Founder of the Faith, as well as the adjoining Mansion.***

The acquired area, raising Bahá'í holdings on the holy plain of &Akka from four thousand to one hundred and fifty-five thousand square meters, was exchanged against property donated by children of Zikrullah, grandchildren of Mírzá Muhammad Quli, Bahá'u'lláh's faithful half-brother and companion in exile.

This spontaneous offer contrasts with the shameful action of the family in the sale to non-Baha'is of the property in the neighborhood of the Jordan valley purchased through the instrumentality of `Abdu'l-Bahá during Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, pursuant to His instructions and alluded to in His writings.

The forty acre property acquired in this single transaction almost equals the entire Bahá'í international endowments purchased in the course of sixty years in the vicinity of the Báb's Sepulcher on the slope of Mount Carmel.

The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners, *traditional supporters of the old Covenant-breakers and descendants of the notorious enemy of `Abdu'l-Bahá who placed his residence at the disposal of the Committee of Investigation.*

The signature to the agreement signalized the commencement of large-scale landscaping, aiming at the beautification of the immediate precincts of the holiest spot in the entire Bahá'í world, itself the prelude to the eventual erection, as happened in the case of the Báb's Sepulcher, of a befitting Mausoleum enshrining the precious Dust of the Most Great Name.

Desire to acknowledge the indefatigable efforts exerted by both Larry Hautz and Leroy Ioas enabling the consummation of the initial stage of the enterprise destined to eclipse in its final phase the splendor and magnificence of the Báb's resting-place on Mount Carmel.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, November 12, 1952]

On January 21, 1949, Shoghi Effendi met with David Ben Gurion. In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting...

> *In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.*
>
> *The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information*
>
> *As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert*

attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

> *"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State. In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."*

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

> *PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith, Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.*
> *Yours sincerely, S. Eynath Legal Adviser*

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title

which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return

call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.

Comments

February 24. On this date in 1927, Douglas Martin, who would serve on the Universal House of Justice from 1993 until his retirement in 2005, was born in Ontario, Canada. In 2000, Juan Cole wrote "A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice"

Original file: 0076.html (position #37)

February 24. On this date in 1927, Douglas Martin, who would serve on the Universal House of Justice from 1993 until his retirement in 2005, was born in Ontario, Canada. In 2000, Juan Cole wrote "A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice"

Douglas Martin was born in Ontario, Canada, on February 24, 1927, where he pursued a professional career as a consultant in advertising and public relations.

On February 28, 1988, Douglas Martin wrote a preface to the 1999 re-publishing of Shoghi Effendi's "Messages to Canada" which is a compilation of letters written to Canadian Bahá'ís

from 1948 to 1957.

Douglas Martin served on the NSA of Canada from 1960 to 1985, when he was appointed director-general of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information at the World Centre in Haifa. He served in that capacity until 1993 when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2005.

Douglas Martin died on September 28, 2020.

In 2000, Juan Cole wrote "A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice"

A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice

by Juan Cole, one of his victims

31 January 2000

Doug Martin told John Walbridge and several other Baha'is in the early 1980s that he viewed me as a covenant breaker. I was at the time a Baha'i in good standing, a former pioneer in Lebanon and Jordan, a travel teacher, studying at UCLA with the son of a Hand of the Cause. It is absolutely outrageous that he was making such charges then, but this is the way he has behaved all along. I presume that he confuses thinking creatively or academically with breaking the Baha'i covenant, an attitude that I think qualifies him as a fundamentalist, or perhaps even a cultist.

This was at a time when he was powerful in the Association for Baha'i Studies and had read some of the materials I submitted to it, as well as corresponding with me about a particular issue. He gave a talk in Canada about the faith in which he advocated Israeli control of Jerusalem. Unbeknownst to him, this talk was taped by the conference organizers, who assumed it was his conference paper submission, and they typed it up and printed it in a book published in India. I discovered the book and wrote him a protest that he was involving the faith in politics in a big way. (The status of Jerusalem is still undetermined in international law). He explained that he had not intended for his remarks to be published. I now realize that he must have been petrified that I might use this incident to discredit him, since of course behind the scenes that is the way he himself has behaved throughout his entire Baha'i career. In fact, I let it go. He nursed a grudge against me thereafter. This Jerusalem talk was typical of the kind of fundamentalist "Zionism" he espouses, along with a lot of other wacky ideas like the world changing dramatically in the year 2000. (How will he backpedal about *that*?) There isn't much difference between his discourse and that of

someone like Jerry Falwell. Note that like the rightwing "Christian Zionists," Martin actually does not mean the Jewish people particularly well, since he just wants to convert them to his religion. His "Zionism" is a use of them for his own, fundamentalist and apocalyptic purposes.

In fact, putting the Canadian clique of Martin, Hatcher and Danesh in charge of the Association for Baha'i Studies in the late 70s and through the 80s was clearly a strategic move on the part of some conservative House members of the time. That clique had no academic credentials in the humanities or social sciences and they so mismanaged the organization that they alienated from it most of the real academics and intellectuals. They provoked the resignation of the California regional committee of the ABS in the mid-80s, and when John Walbridge protested their policies Martin had him fired from the ABS board. When [Gerald] travelled around Europe and made up a directory of Baha'i scholars in Europe, he showed it to Martin, who harshly criticized him for taking the initiative and so hurt his feelings that he left the faith for ten years.

Martin also wrote fierce editorials in the Canadian Baha'i newsletter in the mid-1980s viciously attacking Kalimat Press's Circle series of intellectual explorations of peace, gender equality, etc., for daring suggest that these were "Baha'i" views. As big Honcho in ABS he often rejected paper submissions for being insufficiently fundamentalist, and this happened to a number of bona fide Baha'i academics. He saw ABS as a way of *controlling* rather than nurturing "Baha'i Scholarship." In the late 1980s he had Abbas Amanat out to speak at an ABS convention in Canada. He was very pleasant to Abbas's face. But when Abbas left he conducted a kvetching session with the rightwing Baha'i fundamentalists in the audience who had been enraged by Abbas's academic talk. There is a Hindi-Urdu proverb that someone has a dagger hidden under their arm but keeps chanting the name of Ram in public. (Baghal men~ churi, mun~ men~ Ram Ram.) In 1990 or '91 Martin was brought to Haifa by his buddies on the UHJ to be a publicist for it, and this was read by the NSA members as a signal that the UHJ viewed him as electable to that body. He was also in a prominent position to subtly lobby NSAs. We heard from a Polish Baha'i that their NSA beseeched him for a reply to a Christian critique of the faith in the early '90s and he obliged. There was 9 votes, right there. The NSA members dutifully put him on in 1993, along with Farzam Arbab, who had been brought to the ITC. A shift occurred after 1983 in UHJ elections whereby only appointees of the House were thereafter elected, rather than the members coming from NSAs as had earlier been the practice. I cannot explain this shift except to say that as a social scientist it strikes me as likely to have been engineered behind the scenes rather than being an accident. Since most of the people appointed by the UHJ have been hardliners, this change has allowed arch-conservatives to capture the UHJ.

In 1994-96 when talisman@indiana.edu started up, Martin, Arbab and Semple were constituted as a subcommittee of the UHJ charged with monitoring talisman and the Western Baha'i academics. In fact, of course, there was nothing in the slightest wrong with having a Baha'i discussion list or posting email messages on it. They viewed this as a *crime* in the making! They early on wanted to crack down on us, but were cautious about the possible backlash. By spring of 1996 they had decided to have us accused behind the scenes of breaking the covenant (which was, as they knew very well, ridiculous). Since this had been Martin's line since the early 1980s, it is likely to have been his idea. It was, of course, a disaster for the intellectual development of the faith, though since we really have the faith's best interests at heart it hasn't been as much a disaster as it could have been.

The 1997 expulsion of Michael McKenny from the Canadian Baha'i community (apparently for the crime of holding enlightened views and speaking them on email) is almost certainly also the work of Martin, who has the Canada portfolio on the UHJ.

So, behind the scenes, this man has played a very sinister role in making the administration of the faith inhospitable to intellectual and spiritual exploration of the sort Baha'u'llah clearly desired for us. He has taken what should have been an open-minded faith and made it a crucible for inquisition. Martin doesn't know a word of Arabic or Persian, and has a limited intellectual range. He has by his charisma managed to rise to a number of high offices and has employed double dealing, smear campaigns, behind the scenes threats, and blackballing to shape Baha'i culture in his own misshapen image.

Now, of course, I regret, as a Baha'i, having to speak this way about a fellow Baha'i, but his behavior over 20 years has been so egregious as to leave me, in the end, no choice. However, I will say that he is not beyond redemption, as none of us are. It is not too late for him to reconsider, to repent, to begin *actually* playing the sort of positive role in Baha'i thinking that he has *pretended* in public to play for so long. His actions have profoundly damaged the Cause of Baha'u'llah. It can survive him, but does he really want that to be his epitaph? And my hand of friendship is waiting to be outstretched toward him, should I see that he has genuinely re-thought his past actions and wishes to make amends. It is his choice.

cheers Juan

[P.S. I attach some emails about Martin's activities that I have received through the years. A typical Baha'i apparatchik, stabbing people in the back and gathering power in his hands through subterfuge. ---------- ---------- To: "Juan Cole"

jrcole@umich.edu

Subject: RE: infallibility

Date: Fri, 29 May 1998 21:20:45

Dear Juan,

Yes, the thought that Doug Martin [is infallible] would lead you to uncontrollable fits of laughter is understandable.

What astounds me is the Zen-like humor of the Godhead. When the gentleman in question went from being the secretary of the Canadian NSA to the International Teaching committee, I thought that it was a question of "up and out". Boy, was I wrong!

At one point I was informed that the only way to get anything on the agenda of the Canadian NSA was to go though Doug, I realized how screwed up things were. He effectively ran the Canadian Bahai community. His biases formed the policy of the Canadian NSA, whether the other members of the NSA were aware of it or not. Assemblies learned to approach him via assemblies that were for some odd reason, in favor. It was a subtle dynamic. However if an assembly really needed something done they had to approach an individual on certain other assemblies in order for these ideas to eventually be seen by Doug.

Take care,

At 04:14 PM 3/16/98 +0500, John Walbridge wrote:

. . . Back in about 1982, [Gerald] was a young scholarship groupie . . . I remember doing Sufi dancing with among others him and Steve Scholl on the lawn of Green Acre. Anyway, he wanted to be involved with ABS scholarly activities. He went to Europe, traveled around, met all the aspiring scholars there, and wrote a very detailed report on Baha'i scholarly activity in Europe, telling what everybody was up to. I thought it was rather useful myself; it was the days before the European and American Baha'i academics had had very much contact. I still have a copy of it somewhere.

He presented this thing to the ABS board, hoping for some thanks and I think seeing himself as a sort of contact person between the Europeans and Americans. Doug hit the roof, complaining loudly that no one had asked him to do that and making it clear that he should not speak until spoken too. There was some administrative principle at stake,

although what it might have been, God only knows. I think a letter to that effect was probably sent to [Gerald]. It seemed churlish to me, since the report struck me as useful. Even if it wasn't, a politely hypocritical letter wouldn't have cost us anything. [Gerald] seems to have slunk away and soon after left the Faith for a good many years. He seems to have returned chastened . . .

Date: Sun, 22 Mar 1998 21:42:08 -0700

Subject: Re: Files

Yes, your reporter's [account] seems to be what I recall. I did not know all the details about who at ABS flipped out over his report. Danesh, Hatcher and Martin often seemed to be one-in-the-spirit and they loved to knock down any of us young upstarts who tried to do anything at all. My first Bahai interrogation came at their hands, when the NSA/ABS sent Hatcher to "chat" with me when I was at McGill.

But, as I mentioned, I think [Gerald's] exodus was more complicated than just being upset with ABS. After all, he still had supporters among his peers who would have given him a clearing space to vent and be welcomed. . . . I suspect, but have no inside knowledge, that he felt that his academic prowess was suspect as well and so he left Baha'i studies circles for several years to focus on his music career. This led him to his marriage to a non-Baha'i and it seems that he only returned to Bahai after this marriage ended.

Date: Thu, 20 Jun 1996 22:33:40 -0500 (EST)

From: jwalbrid jwalbrid@indiana.edu

Subject: Re: Status Quo Ante Hardly

I think I wrote up the events for my own benefit at the time, but I don't know where they are. What happened is this, to the best of my memory.

I was appointed to the Board of ABS in 1980 as the first US representative. There were a number of problems with people in California, [T] notable among them. At any rate, the Board eventually decided to seize the nettle and set up a California committee consisting of {BP], [T], and the [B's]. The California committee then wanted to do a conference on Baha'i history, a touchy topic in the aftermath of the West LA Deepening Class and the defection of MacEoin.

This caused a great deal of debate on the Board. What is worse, [BP] wanted to have an anti-nuclear peace conference--in effect, thinking up the Peace Message two years before the House of Justice did. The ABS Board was terrified of losing control in California--at least the Canadians were; I didn't much care. I made two trips to California, the second one at least with Doug Martin, to try to iron things out.

After the second trip, we had a very tense Board meeting at which we ironed out a complicated compromise on how to handle the situation. At that time, I was living in Upper Michigan and had to take this grueling six-leg plane trips to get to and from the meetings in Ottawa, usually involving lost luggage, late or missed flights, or both. The meetings usually petered out on Sunday morning, so for once I decided I would leave at lunch. After lunch, Doug and Bill Hatcher decided to reopen the issue, and the decision was changed after I left in ways that everybody knew I would not have agreed with. I heard about it a couple of days later when I called the ABS office about something else. I was livid and demanded that the issue--whatever exactly it was--be reopened since such a decision should not have been made without consulting me. I heard nothing more, and called [the secretary] back a week or two later. "Oh," she said, "Doug talked to Firuz, and your NSA agrees with him." In fact, this was not true, but it was too late to do anything about it. The California regional committee was dissolved.

There was an aftermath too. I called [the secretary] a month or two later about some routine item of business and asked her when the next Board meeting was scheduled for. "Don't you know?" she asked. "Your NSA has replaced you." I called Firuz, who was the secretary that year, and he said, "I'm very sorry. I had been meaning to call and tell you."

When Hossain Danesh made his annual report to the ABS meeting that year, there was no mention of the California events or of me, for that matter . . .

john

Date: Sat, 22 Jun 1996

Subject: Re: ABS California Committee Redux

As I recall, the ABS Ex. Bd. was not satisfied with disbanding the committee. After the History Conference went forward under the aegis of the LA Assembly, they went to the US NSA and asked them to suppress the conference. The NSA, primarily I suspect out of a sense of territoriality (and also because there was no love lost between Doug Martin and Firuz Kazemzadeh), refused, saying that they saw no reason to intervene in the affairs of

an LSA. Still, Firuz Kazemadeh declined an invitation to attend himself, while Danesh and Martin actively and publicly campagined against the conference.

I believe that the "Central Committee," as I liked to call it, planned all of the regional conference for the first few years until the local committees had proven themselves. But they still might intervene to change the program. When I was invited to speak at a conference in the Northwest region in the 1980's, someone on the committee called me one day before the conference to say that my paper had been cancelled because of a reference to "Babi uprisings" in the introduction--I was informed in no uncertain terms that there were no Babi uprisings. Someone on the committee, it turned out, had complained to friends in Ottowa after the invitation (with a promise of airfare and accomodations) had been issued. Never mind that the term was not even in the shortened version of the paper that I planned to deliver there--somehow, because I would harbor such an idea, my ideas were tainted and therefore I shouldn't be allowed (let alone invited) to speak. After that I didn't see much point in participating in ABS, which I presume is precisely what the Central Committee wanted.

Date: Tue, 17 Dec 1996 09:36:50 +0800 (HKT)

Subject: Re: jilted and scorned On Mon, 16 Dec 1996, X wrote:

> *The publishing thing seems to be a particularly ingrained bee in the bonnet for the US NSA. When George Ronald was founded (with Shoghi Effendi's 'connivance') the US NSA wrote to the British NSA and lectured them in very sharp terms about the unwisdom of permitting this and how they would never permit any publication of Baha'i materials that was not under their direct control.*

More than "connivance," GR was started with SE's encouragement and personal financial support--primarily, I gather, because the BPT was totally incompetent. The former manager of the BPT use to delight in tellling about how the US NSA tried to suppress GR at a time when Shoghi Effendi was so supportive of the endeavor.

It is true that the publishing issue has been almost an obsession with the NSA, though I am not sure why. When a Baha'i in Oregon reprinted the Song Celestial in the 1960's he was told by the NSA that he could not distribute the book within the Baha'i community, although it had passed review. And the US NSA has made numerous attempts to control

the distribution of Kalimat (and, I think 1 or 2 GR) books that they did not like, as did the Canadian NSA under Doug Martin.

On Tuesday, 18 Feb 1997 I received a message reporting that on a BBC broadcast, Douglas Martin said that the proof of the truth or falsity of the Baha$\diamond$is faith would be that universal peace would arrive by the year 2000. It was pointed out that since Martin$\diamond$s faith seems to rest on such matters, he might be forced into apostasy by the next war. J

Date: Tue, 1 Apr 1997

Re: Danesh resigns over sex charges On Tue, 1 Apr 1997, X wrote:

> *Martin must have arranged the cushy Landegg position to get Danesh out >of the hot seat in Canada . . . The old boy network forgives anything >but sass.*

I was not aware there were *three* patients involved in this complaint; I thought there was only one (who was a Baha'i). Danesh was actually given an opportunity to give his version of these events at the Canadian Baha'i National Convention; his accuser received no such opportunity.

[I have heard of an alleged] instance in which Danesh leaked confidential information gleaned from therapy sessions with a patient to the Baha'i World Centre personnel office (as a member of the NSA), which itself is a serious violation of professional ethics.

Date: 01 Apr 97 11:48:39 BST

Subject: Re: mischief

There is little doubt that Martin set up Danesh with the Landegg job. You may also note that the UHJ have written letters in support of Danesh's crap *Applied Spirituality* course there. The problem is Landegg's programme. Notwithstanding the fact that he (and usually a family member) speak at EVERY course, there seem to be a liberal sprinking of NSA members invited to speak . . there were NSA members flown in from Brazil, America, Canada. He invited the whole of the UK NSA there a few months ago for a seminar on consultation. People less cynical than me may say that he is campaigning.

Clever he is - to ingratiate himself further with Haifa, he invites family members . . .

Date: Tue, 27 Aug 96

Subject: house members

I think Bill Hatcher is another one that was highlighted for membership [on the UHJ], but for the same reasons, delegates refused him. During the time of the peace statement, it became widely known that Hatcher, Martin and Kazemzadeh were the 3 persons who wrote that statement -- of course this info was leaked by Haifa itself.

Hatcher is young enough that he might still make it, though its also widely known that he has heart problems.

Date: Sat, 27 Apr 1996

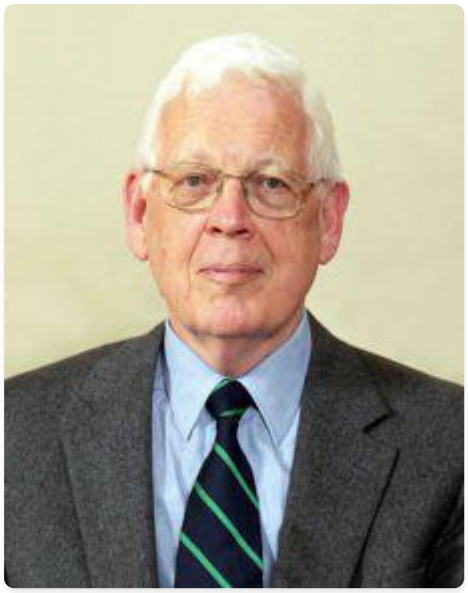
Subject: Impact of Talisman

I don't think that there is any doubt that Talisman is having an impact. When X was in Haifa a few months ago, she questioned by two different House (Peter Kahn and Douglas Martin) about Talisman, and they particularly wanted to know how *she* and her twenty-something Baha'i peers viewed it . . . it is more of an indication about the state of the Baha'i Community than about the nature of the discussions. Talisman should not be a such a big issue, but the fact is it is.

Date: 23 Aug 96

Subject: Snooping around

[I�ve heard that] someone on the House has asked Hussein Danesh to find out what you guys are up to, and in particular what the discussions on the Birkland matter were leading to on IRFAN.



Comments

February 24. On this date in 1958, the NSA of the U.S. and the American Hands of the Cause of God wrote the Custodians about "problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing."

February 24. On this date in 1958, the NSA of the U.S. and the American Hands of the Cause of God wrote the Custodians about "problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing."

On March 10, 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

> *To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley*
>
> *March 10, 1958*
>
> *Revered Bahá'í Brother:*
>
> *The Hands in the Holy Land are sending a detailed answer to the questions raised in the letter of February 24, 1958 addressed to us by the American Hands and the National Spiritual Assembly.*

We believe that the points covered in our letter also meet the request made in your separate communication of February 25 to your fellow Hands in Haifa.

Here, as you know, we receive letters from all parts of the world which reflect the approach of the believers of diverse backgrounds to the ***problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing.*** *As a result, the Custodians have been made very conscious of the necessity to strive for unity in the approach to fundamental matters affecting the structure and future development of the Cause. The Custodians from East and West are aware of the wisdom of avoiding statements or points of view on basic issues which cannot be accepted equally by East and West, and indeed by all of the Bahá'í world, especially in this period, so soon after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, when* ***we are still unable to grasp the full implications of the present situation.***

It would have been a great help if you yourself could have served here in these early and critical months, and given us the benefit of your experience and clarity of thought on the many pressing issues with which we have had to cope.

You will now, we feel sure, understand our delicate position and the reasons why we felt it necessary to urge that the statement "A New Bahá'í Era" be withdrawn from circulation. *Your fellow-Hands serving here are confident you will place this whole question and its world-wide implications before the members of your National Assembly in such a way that they will fully understand the reasons underlying the actions taken here.*

No doubt when the entire body of the Hands gather at our next meeting later this year we will have many things to discuss, and each one win have a greater contribution to make in view of this tragic year's experiences.

We all send you our devoted love and assure you that you are often remembered in our prayers.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

February 24. On this date in 1995, the International Teaching Centre addressed a letter to a Continental Board of Counsellors wherein it was stated "Participation by enemies of the Faith or members of Covenant-breaker groups may, indeed, occur in the dialogue on electronic forums. It is not ..."

Original file: 0074.html (position #35)

February 24. On this date in 1995, the International Teaching Centre addressed a letter to a Continental Board of Counsellors wherein it was stated "Participation by enemies of the Faith or members of Covenant-breaker groups may, indeed, occur in the dialogue on electronic forums. It is not advisable for the institutions of the Faith or its individual members to become directly involved in such discussion. It is neither wise nor possible to interfere with postings on public forums, but if it is observed that such activity is taking place on Bahá'í-only forums National Assemblies should be alerted so that they may

provide appropriate advice to the administrator of the forum. The greatest protection to the Faith will not be through intervention on either open or closed electronic forums, but through ongoing deepening of the Bahá'í community in the Covenant and the history and Teachings of the Faith."

Comments

February 24. On this date in 2003, the NSA of the U.K. wrote British Bahá'ís to "exercise extreme caution in any active involvement in demonstrations" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq adding "Bahá'ís may wish to consider channelling their energies into more positive actions, particularly those ...

Original file: 0073.html (position #34)

February 24. On this date in 2003, the NSA of the U.K. wrote British Bahá'ís to "exercise extreme caution in any active involvement in demonstrations" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq adding "Participating in a march or demonstration for or against military action in another country presupposes taking sides...Bahá'ís may wish to consider channelling their energies into more positive actions, particularly those which enable Bahá'ís at local level to 'participate in building peace without becoming entangled with political interests'...Bahá'ís who are asked for the Bahá'í position on the Middle East situation should respond that the

Bahá'í Faith does not take positions on particular crises or conflicts...At moments of crisis such as this, the needs and the opportunities for attracting ever larger numbers of souls to the Cause of God are at their greatest."

"Responding to the Middle East Crisis"

Guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly

24 February 2003

The National Spiritual Assembly is aware that reactions in the UK at national, regional and local levels to the possibility of war in Iraq and to the anticipated policies of the UK and United States governments has resulted in an increase in anti-war and anti-government activities, and that these activities are contributing to divisive sentiments and tensions. Members of the Bahá'í community may be uncertain as to what the proper Bahá'í attitude should be with regard to their involvement in these matters. Some Bahá'ís may wish to participate in anti-war demonstrations or to assert their 'right and responsibility' to protest.

The National Assembly asks the believers to carefully study the relevant guidance given by the Guardian and by the Universal House of Justice so that they will be better able to appreciate and understand not only the implications of any actions they wish to take, but also the wider perspective on the unfoldment of world events.

In a letter dated 12 January 2003 and written on its behalf to an individual believer, the Universal House of Justice summarises the issues very clearly:

> *'As you are aware, it is not the practice of Bahá'í institutions or individuals to take positions on the political decisions of governments. One of the greatest obstacles to progress is the tendency of Bahá'ís to be drawn into the general attitudes and disputes that surround them. The central importance of the principle of avoidance of politics and controversial matters is that Bahá'ís should not allow themselves to be involved in the disputes of the many conflicting elements of the society around them.*
>
> *'The aim of the Bahá'ís is to reconcile viewpoints, to heal divisions, and to bring about tolerance and mutual respect among men, and this aim is*

> *undermined if we allow ourselves to be swept along by the ephemeral passions of others. This does not mean that Bahá'ís cannot collaborate with any non-Bahá'í movement; it does mean that good judgment is required to distinguish those activities and associations which are beneficial and constructive from those which are divisive.'*

Bahá'ís should exercise extreme caution in any active involvement in demonstrations. *Although there is no prohibition against individual Bahá'ís joining in marches and demonstrations as long as they are legal, non-violent, and politically non-partisan, the National Assembly hopes that individuals will be guided by their Bahá'í principles when considering the implications of their participation in this type of activity. In the current situation, the overarching principle is that the Bahá'í Faith does not take sides in conflicts between countries.* ***Participating in a march or demonstration for or against military action in another country presupposes taking sides.***

In a letter dated 27 November 2001 on its behalf to an individual, the House of Justice says this:

> *'The programme of the Bahá'í Cause itself operates in the political realm to the extent that it is concerned with inducing changes in public policy and behaviour at local, national and international levels. To this end, the community collaborates with other like-minded organisations and works closely with sympathetic governments and United Nations agencies. In doing so, its efforts are scrupulous to avoid entanglement in agendas that serve the interests of particular parties, factions, or similarly biased political forces. This standard must likewise govern the behaviour of individual believers.'*

Bahá'ís may wish to consider channelling their energies into more positive actions, particularly those which enable Bahá'ís at local level to 'participate in building peace without becoming entangled with political interests'. *Local Spiritual Assemblies are free to explore such possibilities, in accordance with their financial and human resources.*

Bahá'ís who are asked for the Bahá'í position on the Middle East situation should respond that the Bahá'í Faith does not take positions on particular crises or conflicts. *We hope and pray that all such conflicts will be resolved quickly and as peacefully as possible. We are confident, in spite of conflicts which erupt in the world, that world peace is inevitable. Bahá'ís support international law and the role of the United Nations. It would not be appropriate for Bahá'í institutions or individuals representing Bahá'í institutions to participate in demonstrations regarding the crisis in the Middle East.*

As Bahá'ís, we are aware that there will be great turmoil in the world before world peace is attained. The Bahá'í Faith teaches that through the development of collective security and of international law the means will be found to control aggression.

Study of the following will help the friends develop a deeper understanding of the processes at work in the world: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, *especially pages 64-67 and pages 191-193,* The Advent of Divine Justice, *especially pages 72-77,* 'The Promise of World Peace', The Promised Day is Come, *pages 114-124, and* Citadel of Faith,*pages 30-38. The National Spiritual Assembly also strongly recommends that we study* Century of Light, *the document issued by the Universal House of Justice at Naw-Ruz 2001 that reviews the profound changes that our world underwent during the twentieth century in the context of the Bahá'í Teachings.*

The Major Plan of God *proceeds in mysterious and unpredictable ways until it has achieved its destined goal - the unification of the human race in a global society that has banished war and taken charge of its collective destiny. But this process has barely begun and we still have a long way to go. It is ultimately a spiritual process, and in traversing the great distance that lies ahead there will clearly be many obstacles and pitfalls. As* Century of Light *states:*

> *'It would be unrealistic to imagine that the challenges lying ahead may not exact an even greater toll of a human race that still seeks, by every means in its power, to avoid the spiritual implications of the experience it is undergoing.' [*Century of Light, *p. 138].*

The Bahá'ís should not be daunted by the world situation. In a timeless piece of

exposition, Shoghi Effendi has already set out what should be our approach to the operation of God's Major Plan and the recurrent turbulence associated with it. The Bahá'ís must:

> *'...acknowledge its necessity, observe confidently its mysterious processes, ardently pray for the mitigation of its severity, intelligently labour to assuage its fury, and anticipate, with undimmed vision, the consummation of the fears and the hopes that it must necessarily engender.' [Promised Day Is Come, p. 4]*

Let this guidance of our beloved Guardian shape our response to what is happening to current world events.

At moments of crisis such as this, the needs and the opportunities for attracting ever larger numbers of souls to the Cause of God are at their greatest. *People are longing for solutions to the problems that have beset humanity for far too long. Let us, then, devote ourselves, our time, energy and resources, to the Plan at hand, with complete confidence that from our humble efforts will emerge the unassailable foundation of the true and enduring peace of mankind.*

With loving Bahá'í greetings

National Spiritual Assembly

Acknowledgement: Some of the guidance in this document is quoted from letters issued in 1991 and 2003 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, to whom we are most grateful.

In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq.

David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On August 11, 2003, *The Independent* carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

On July 17, 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter "to the Bahá'ís of the World" announcing "with utter shock and desolating grief that the Bahá'ís in Baghdad discovered on 26 June that the "most holy habitation" of Bahá'u'lláh had been razed almost to the ground to make way for the construction of a mosque," at the end of what the Universal Hose of Justice calls a "highly delicate situation in Iraq over the last tumultuous decade."

It is somewhat ironic, that in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq. David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

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Comments

February 24. On this date in 2005, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States filed a complaint with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center against the Second International Bahá'í Council on the use of the domain uhj.net. The complaint was denied on May 8, 2005.

Original file: 0072.html (position #33)

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WIPO Domain Name Dispute: Case D2005-0214, "uhj.net" 2005-08-25 WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States v. Second International Bahá'í Council

Case No. D2005-0214

1. The Parties

The Complainant is National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation with an office in Evanston, Illinois, United States of America. Complainant is represented by Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione, Chicago, Illinois, United States of America.

The Respondent is Second International Bahá'í Council, an entity with an address in Missoula, Montana, United States of America, represented by Neal Chase of Missoula, Montana, United States of America.

1. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name, <uhj.net>, is registered with iHoldings.com Inc., doing business as DotRegistrar.com.

1. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on February 24, 2005. On February 25, 2005, the Center transmitted, by e-mail, to DotRegistrar.com a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On February 28, 2005, DotRegistrar.com transmitted to the Center, by e-mail, its verification, confirming that Respondent is listed as the registrant of the domain name, indicating that it had "locked" the domain name, confirming several details of its registration agreement, and providing the Center with contact information for the registrant. The Center verified that the Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Policy"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with Rules 2(a) and 4(a), the Center formally notified Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on March 3, 2005. In accordance with Rule 5(a), the Response was due on March 23, 2005. The Response was filed with the Center on March 23, 2005.

The Center appointed Debra J. Stanek as the sole panelist in this matter on April 22, 2004. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence required by the Center to ensure compliance with Rule 7.

On April 1, 2005, Complainant submitted to the Center, by e-mail, a request to provide a reply, stating that Respondent's submission had made "several inaccurate and confusing statements" that "may need to be addressed."

Because Complainant had indicated that it had not sent a copy of its communication to Respondent, the Center forwarded the request to Respondent. On April 8, 2005, Respondent submitted to the Center, by e-mail, its opposition to the request.

1. Factual Background

The Bahá'í faith, to which both parties to this dispute claim to adhere, was founded in the mid-1800s.

According to Complainant, in 1963, members of the Complainant, along with members of other National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís around the world, created an institution called the "Universal House of Justice." The Universal House of Justice is apparently the highest authority of the Bahá'í faith and has its headquarters in Haifa, Israel.

Complainant owns a United States federal trademark registration, issued in 1965, for the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE for publications. Complainant also claims to have used THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with "other religious activities" involving the Bahá'í faith.

According to the Respondent, the term "Universal House of Justice" is defined, in the will of the founder of the Bahá'í faith and other documents related to its establishment and institutions, as an entity whose president is a descendant of King David, the king of Israel during biblical times. Respondent claims to be a descendant of David and therefore the leader of the "true" Universal House of Justice for the Bahá'í faith.

Respondent registered the <uhj.net> domain name in 2000. Visitors to the "www.uhj.net" website are presented with a page that identifies the site as "The Official Website of the Universal House of Justice." The home page includes a photograph of a Bahá'í shrine located in Israel and a quotation to the effect that the president of the Universal House of Justice must be a descendant of King David and that such leadership distinguishes "the true UHJ from fakes, frauds, and imitations."

1. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant makes the following contentions:

Complainant has been authorized by the Universal House of Justice to serve as the highest authority for the Bahá'í faith in the United States. In addition, the Universal House of Justice has authorized Complainant, exclusively, to use the symbols of the Bahá'í faith in the United States.

The disputed domain name, <uhj.net>, is confusingly similar to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE trademark, which has been used extensively for many years. The acronym "uhj" used by Respondent is recognized and used by followers of the Bahá'í faith to refer to THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark.

Respondent is using "uhj" as an acronym for THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE trademark without the permission or consent of Complainant. The home page for <uhj.net> is identified as "The Official Website of the Universal House of Justice," depicts one of the holiest of Bahá'í shrines, and contains a link labeled "Click here to contact the UHJ" that leads visitors to an e-mail address that is not the address of Complainant or the Universal House of Justice in Israel.

Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. Respondent does not own trademark applications or registrations for the marks THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE or UHJ and is not known by either name. Instead, Respondent is using the domain name to divert those seeking Complainant's website and Respondent has caused actual confusion among followers of the Bahá'í faith.

Respondent registered and is using the domain name in bad faith. Respondent has diverted those seeking the official website of the Bahá'í faith and used misleading designations to confuse followers of the Bahá'í faith and to disrupt Complainant's organization. Further, the content of Respondent's website is not in accord with the teachings of the Bahá'í faith.

B. Respondent

Respondent contends:

Pursuant to various documents, Respondent is the successor to property of the Bahá'í faith, including its intellectual property, because, among other things, he is a descendant of King David. Complainant does not have a right to use the name "The Universal House of

Justice," or any Bahá'í property, intellectual or otherwise.

Complainant's registration of the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE was in bad faith, done with the intention of hijacking Respondent's rights.

Respondent is using the domain name in good faith to promote itself as the true Universal House of Justice. Its website is intended to distinguish it from the Complainant; it explicitly refers to the fact that the "true UHJ" must have as its president a descendant of King David.

Respondent has rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. For many years before notice of the dispute, Respondent prepared to use and used the name "Universal House of Justice" and "UHJ" for its legitimate religious, non-commercial purposes as the "true and legal" Universal House of Justice.

Respondent is making legitimate non-commercial, fair use of the domain name, without any intent of commercial gain or any attempt to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark at issue.

Respondent is not affiliated with Complainant and has no desire to confuse those who follow Complainant's teachings. The home page of Respondent's website discloses its views regarding the "true" Universal House of Justice, headed by a descendant of King David, and other "fakes, frauds, and imitations."

The domain name was not registered or acquired primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to Complainant. The domain name was not registered in order to prevent Complainant from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name and Respondent has not engaged in a pattern of such conduct.

Complainant is engaging in reverse domain name hijacking.

1. Discussion and Findings

A. Procedural Matters

As noted above, Complainant has requested an opportunity to submit a reply to respond to "inaccurate and confusing statements" in the Response. 1 As an initial matter, neither the Rules nor the Supplementary Rules provide for the filing of a reply.

Although litigants and parties in arbitrations may have a right of reply under the rules of

other forums, ICANN chose a different procedure for these proceedings that calls for only a Complaint and a Response. Among other things, this more truncated procedure allows for more rapid and cost effective resolution of domain name challenges. [citation omitted].

See Document Technologies, Inc. v. International Electronic Communications Inc. (WIPO Case No. D2000-0270). Rule 12 does, however, permit a panel to request further documents and statements. Such requests always involve balancing the provisions of Rule 10, which require a panel to ensure both that each party has a "fair opportunity" to present its case and that the proceeding take place with "due expedition."

The Panel is of the view that supplementary submissions are appropriate only in 'exceptional' cases, such as where new, pertinent facts arose or new, relevant legal authority was reported after a party's submission. See Document Technologies, supra. To seek or accept supplemental submissions under other circumstances undercuts the purpose of the streamlined procedures established by ICANN.

Complainant's cited reason for its seeking to supplement its initial submission was that Respondent made "inaccurate and confusing statements" that "may need to be addressed." In the Panel's view, the cited reason does not fit within the limited circumstances under which supplementary submissions are appropriate.

B. Burden of Proof

In order to prevail, Complainant must prove:

(i) The <uhj.net> domain name is identical or confusingly similar to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark; and

(ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the <uhj.net> domain name; and

(iii) The domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

Policy, paragraph 4(a). The Policy sets out four sets of circumstances that may evidence a Respondent's bad faith registration and use under Paragraph 4(a)(iii), see Policy, paragraph 4(b), as well as examples of circumstances that may evidence a Respondent's rights or legitimate interests in a domain name, see Policy, paragraph 4(c).

(1) Identical or Confusingly Similar

Complainant must establish that the disputed domain name is either identical or

confusingly similar to its mark. For purposes of considering identity or confusing similarity, the ".net" top-level domain is not relevant.

Complainant's mark is THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. Complainant does not argue that the <uhj.net> domain name is identical to its mark and it is not. Further, Complainant does not claim any trademark rights in "uhj" and has not identified any use by it of "uhj" in any manner, including to identify itself, its activities, the institution in Israel, or the activities of that institution. Complainant must, therefore, establish that the domain name is "confusingly similar" to its mark.

Neither the Policy nor the Rules expressly articulate a test for determining "confusing similarity" and other panels have applied different tests. Some have limited the test to determining the degree of resemblance of the domain name and mark at issue as to "sight, sound, and meaning." Others have considered the degree of resemblance along with factors such as the distinctiveness of the mark, how well-known the mark is, how long the mark has been used, and the nature of the goods and services with which the mark is used.

This Panel has previously concluded that only the degree of resemblance between the Complainant's mark and the disputed domain name should determine confusing similarity. See Columbia Insurance Company v. Pampered Gourmet, WIPO Case No. D2004-0649. As stated in Columbia Insurance, this is because paragraph 4(a) refers only to the identity or confusing similarity while paragraph 4(b)(iv), in contrast, expressly refers to "likelihood of confusion . . . as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement." Further, the Policy is intended to be international in scope, which suggests that -- absent express language -- a panel should be cautious about interpreting the Policy as incorporating a test that may not exist in a number of jurisdictions. See Bradford & Bingley Plc v. Registrant info@fashionID.com 987654321, WIPO Case No. D2002-0499.

Complainant argues that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark. For the reasons set out below, the Panel concludes that "uhj" does not resemble THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE in appearance, pronunciation, or meaning.

The disputed domain name incorporates only the initial letters of three of the five words that make up the mark -- "uhj" -- resulting in significant differences in appearance and pronunciation between the two. The acronym "uhj" has no inherent meaning. Acronyms, by their nature, may stand for more than one combination of words. Although Complainant has provided copies of e-mail messages that seem to suggest that some members of the Bahá'í faith use "uhj" as an abbreviation for the words "Universal House of Justice," the

Panel finds that these messages do not establish that the acronym has the same meaning as the words.

First, the only evidence of Complainant's trademark rights is its federal registration for use of the mark in connection with publications. Yet the messages supplied by Complainant do not appear to use the acronym "UHJ" to refer to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE publications or mark. Instead, they appear to refer to the institution, the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel (for example, requests for prayers, a request to visit shrines in Israel, etc.). Complainant has asserted that it uses THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with "other religious activities" involving the Bahá'í faith. However, Complainant has not provided any evidence of use of the mark in connection with those other activities. In the absence of any evidence, Complainant has not established common law rights in THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with those unspecified activities, rendering the e-mail messages ambiguous at best.

Second, all of the evidence consists of e-mail messages. The use of acronyms and abbreviations in such messages is common. The Panel is not convinced that this evidence supports a more widespread use and understanding that "UHJ" signifies Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE pamphlets or Complainant.

Finally, relying on the understanding of members of the Bahá'í faith to establish the "meaning" of the acronym, is inconsistent with the test of confusing similarity that this Panel has adopted.

The decision in Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Council of the United States v. Alex Yip, WIPO Case No. D2004-0121, supports the Panel's conclusion. In that somewhat analogous case, the panel rejected an argument that the disputed domain name, < svdpusacouncil.org>, was confusingly similar to the registered mark, SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL U.S.A. ST V DE P. The panel noted that "only a part of the registered mark is incorporated into the disputed domain name, and the ‘svdp' portion of the domain name shows up as ST V DE P in the registered mark." Here too, only a portion of the registered THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark is incorporated into the disputed domain name.

However, in St. Vincent de Paul, the complainant also contended that over the years, it had been known by the acronym "SVDP." The panel concluded that the acronym had acquired sufficient common law rights to merit protection because it appeared that the acronym had been "used by Complainant for many years to identify it and the charitable services

provided by Complainant." In contrast here, there is no evidence that Complainant has ever, at any time, itself used "uhj" to identify itself or its services. Further, and as discussed above, the e-mail messages that Complainant has characterized as showing the use, by members of the Bahá'í faith, of the acronym to identify Complainant are ambiguous.

Complainant cites two decisions by other panels for the proposition that a domain name that is an acronym of a trademark is confusingly similar to the trademark. In Successful Money Management Seminars, Inc. v. Financial Services of California, Claim No. FA0006000095042 (National Arbitration Forum, July 31, 2000), the panel stated that <fssr.com> was confusingly similar to the FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT trademark, for which it was an acronym. However, in that case, the panel's observation was not necessary to the decision because the complainant owned a trademark registration for the mark FSSR and the Panel does not find it persuasive here.

In VeriSign, Inc. v. Michael Brook, WIPO Case No. D2000-1139, the panel concluded that various "vrsn" domain names were confusingly similar to the complainant's VERISIGN trademark. The Panel believes that it is more aptly described as an abbreviation of the mark.2 This distinction is important because an abbreviated form of a trademark is more likely than an acronym to resemble a mark in sight, sound, and meaning. In any case, in the Panel's view, "vrsn" more closely resembles the mark VERISIGN than "uhj" resembles the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

In addition, although Verisign did not use "vrsn" as a trademark, Verisign did use "VRSN" as the symbol under which shares of its stock were publicly traded. As noted above, Complainant has not made any comparable claim or presented any evidence showing that it uses "uhj" in any manner, much less as a mark or other type of identifier.

Under the circumstances of this case, the Panel finds that Complainant has not met its burden of establishing that Respondent's domain name is confusingly similar to a mark in which Complainant has rights.

(2) Rights or Legitimate Interests

As noted above, a complainant must establish each of the three elements outlined in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy in order to prevail. In light of the conclusion that Complainant has not established the first element, it is not necessary to address the issue of Respondent's claim to have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

(3) Registered and Used in Bad Faith

For the same reasons outlined above, it is not necessary to address the issue of bad faith.

(4) Reverse Domain Name Hijacking

Respondent asserts that Complainant is engaged in reverse domain name hijacking. Reverse domain name hijacking is defined in Rule 1 as "using the Policy in bad faith to attempt to deprive a registered domain-name holder of a domain name."

The Panel finds this case presented challenging issues (although not all are discussed in this decision). The Panel concludes that the Complaint was not an attempt at reverse domain name hijacking.

1. Decision

For all the foregoing reasons, the Complaint is denied.

Debra J. Stanek Sole Panelist

Dated: May 8, 2005

1 Complainant did not send a copy of its request directly to Respondent, apparently believing Respondent had a "religious objection" to communicating with it. While the Panel appreciates Complainant's sensitivity, it did not interpret the statement that Respondent had, consistent with Respondent's religious beliefs, ignored Complainant's cease and desist letter, to be an objection to receiving communications. Moreover, the Panel reminds Complainant of Rule 2(h): "Any communication by . . . a Party shall be copied to the other Party, the Panel and the Provider, as the case may be" (emphasis added). 2 Compare Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 10th edition, s.v. "acronym" (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=acronym) (defining "acronym" as: "a word (as NATO, radar, or snafu) formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term; also : an abbreviation (as FBI) formed from initial letters") with Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 10th edition, s.v. "abbreviation (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book =Dictionary&va=abbreviation) (defining "abbreviation" as: "2 : a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole <amt is an abbreviation for amount>").

Comments

February 25. On this date in 1976, the UHJ wrote that "A Bahá'í deprived of his voting rights cannot be married in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony; a Bahá'í in good standing cannot marry a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights; the marriage of a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights does not fall..."

Original file: 0071.html (position #32)

February 25. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to a National Spiritual Assembly stating that "A Bahá'í deprived of his voting rights cannot be married in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony; a Bahá'í in good standing cannot marry a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights; the marriage of a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights does not fall within the jurisdiction of a Bahá'í administrative institution."

199. No Bahá'í Marriage if One is Deprived of Voting Rights--A Bahá'í in Good Standing Cannot Marry One So Deprived

"A Bahá'í deprived of his voting rights cannot be married in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony; a Bahá'í in good standing cannot marry a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights; the marriage of a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights does not fall within the jurisdiction of a Bahá'í administrative institution.

"In other words, Bahá'ís who have lost their voting rights cannot be constrained to Bahá'í administrative requirements although their consciences should lead them to act as closely to the standards and ordinances of Bahá'í life as possible."

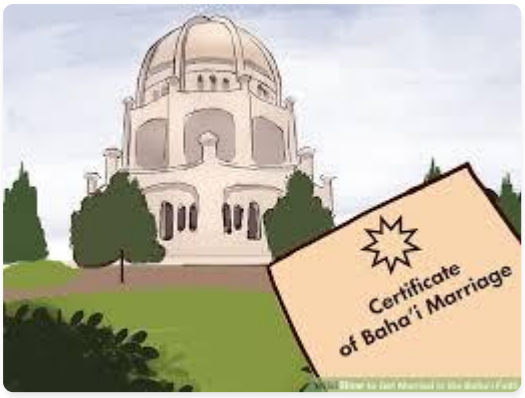
(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, February 25, 1976, cited by the International Teaching Center)

Similarly, on April 6, 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote "A Bahá'í who has lost his administrative rights is administratively expelled from the community and therefore is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly in the matter of laws of personal status, such as divorce..."

207. Loss of Voting Rights--Is to be Administratively Expelled

"A Bahá'í who has lost his administrative rights is administratively expelled from the community and therefore is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly in the matter of laws of personal status, such as divorce, unless, of course, he is involved in such a matter through having a Bahá'í spouse in good standing from whom the divorce is taking place. His observance of such laws is a matter of conscience and he would not be subject to further sanctions for non-observance of Bahá'í laws during the period he is without voting rights."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, April 6, 1982)



Comments

February 25. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter regarding major objectives and national goals of the Six Year Plan.

Original file: 0070.html (position #31)

February 25. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter regarding major objectives and national goals of the Six Year Plan.

The Universal House of Justice Department of the Secretariat

25 February 1986

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Six Year Plan

On 2 January 1986, on the closing day of the Counselors' Conference, the Universal House of Justice announced certain features of the Six Year Plan and the methods by which the national goals were to be worked out in consultation between the Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. Before Riḍván you will receive a message from the Universal House of Justice to the entire Bahá'í world and also one addressed specifically to the Bahá'ís within the jurisdiction of each National Spiritual Assembly.

In the meantime the House of Justice wishes you to begin your consultations on the goals of the Six Year Plan for your country. The preliminary steps in goal-setting have already been taken, namely the assessment of each country's strengths and weaknesses which the

National Spiritual Assemblies recently made at the request of the Universal House of Justice, and which will undoubtedly be of great assistance to each one of you as you enter the next stage of the process.

The House of Justice has instructed us to send you the following additional guidelines together with the enclosed statement of the major objectives of the plan at the national level, which includes some suggestions for specific goals to provide a basis for your consultations. You should not, however, confine yourselves to those suggestions.

A special characteristic of the Six Year Plan is that the conceiving of the detailed national goals is itself to be one of the tasks of the Plan, but this fact should not hold up in any way the activities of your communities. With this letter you are being acquainted with the major objectives of the plan and every believer, every Local Spiritual Assembly, and all the national committees can pursue immediately, with increasing vigor, many projects towards their attainment, both projects already in process and others which will be newly conceived, so that when the specific national goals for each community are announced they will be received by a united company of devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh already in the full flood of activity.

It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that each National Assembly will be able to meet before Riḍván with a representative of the Continental Board of Counselors so that from this initial consultation a basis will be laid for consultation on the goals at the National Conventions.

Other consultations will no doubt continue following the Riḍván Festival. Their duration will depend on the condition of each national community, its size and the complexity of its circumstances. As soon as specific goals have been formulated and agreed they should be immediately sent to the World Center. They will then be considered by the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre, and, as soon as possible, the National Assembly will be informed of the approval or modification of its proposal. Each submission will be considered on its arrival; the earlier they arrive the better, and in no case should a submission reach the World Center later than 1 November 1986.

Among the elements of the plan which are not covered by the list of major objectives are the goals for international assistance including pioneering, resident teaching projects, traveling teaching, assistance for development projects, and for the acquisition of properties and vehicles. Notes relating to these elements have been provided to the Continental Boards of Counselors who will share them with National Assemblies during the process of consultation. Since they are international in nature, these goals will have to be

consolidated and approved at the World Center before being generally announced.

Though the institutions of the Faith are responsible for planning the goals and activities of the Cause, for stimulating and encouraging the believers to arise, and for supporting and unifying them in their services, it is, in the final analysis, through the spiritual decisions and actions of the individual believers that the Faith moves forward on its course to ultimate victory. It is the ardent hope of the Universal House of Justice that every faithful follower of Bahá'u'lláh will search his or her heart and turn with full attention and loving self-sacrifice to the consideration of the goals of the Six Year Plan, and determine how to play a part in their achievement.

The prayers of the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre at the Sacred Threshold will surround the institutions of the Faith in every continent and nation as you assume your weighty task of conceiving the goals which will guide the national communities of the Faith through the next six years.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Six Year Plan

143–149 • 1986–1992

The Major Objectives

The major objectives of the Six Year Plan include: carrying the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the generality of mankind; greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society; a worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of national and local Bahá'í communities; greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers; a wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life; and the pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities.

Set out below are suggestions for possible ways of achieving the above objectives to act as a basis for consultation and a stimulus for thinking. National Assemblies should not confine themselves to these points if they feel that there are other matters which deserve attention.

1 Carrying the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the generality of mankind

Increase the number of believers from all strata of society, identifying as goals of the plan those specific sectors, minority groups, tribal peoples, etc. which are at present underrepresented in the Bahá'í community and which will, therefore, be given special attention during the plan.

Increase the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside, opening, in the process, virgin states, provinces, islands or other major civil subdivisions of the country.

Seize teaching opportunities by planning projects in areas where receptivity is found, aiming at large-scale enrollment and entry by troops where possible.

Be alert to opportunities for international collaboration with other Bahá'í communities in the promotion of the Faith through: border teaching projects; the sending of traveling teachers; and the teaching of special groups such as those temporarily abroad for study or work, particularly those from countries which are difficult of access, such as China or countries in Eastern Europe.

Raise up homefront pioneers and traveling or resident teachers to assist in the fulfillment of teaching goals and plans.

Utilize mass media systems for greater proclamation.

Make use of drama and singing in the teaching and deepening work and in Bahá'í gatherings, where advisable.

2 Greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society

Develop the proper understanding and practice of consultation among members of the Bahá'í community and in the work of Bahá'í institutions, and foster the spirit of consultation in the conduct of human affairs and the resolution of conflicts at all levels of society.

Foster association with organizations, prominent persons and those in authority concerning the promotion of peace, world order and allied objectives, with a view to offering the Bahá'í teachings and insights regarding current problems and thought.

Train suitable Bahá'ís to undertake public relations activities.

Foster appreciation of the Faith in scholarly and academic circles by developing Bahá'í scholarship, by endeavoring to have the Faith included in the curricula and textbooks of

schools and universities, and by other means.

Encourage Bahá'í youth to move towards the front ranks of those professions, trades, arts and crafts necessary to human progress.

Promote the establishment of Bahá'í clubs in universities and other similar educational institutions.

Foster the practice of the equality of the sexes both in the life of the Bahá'í community and in society as a whole and, for this purpose, hold special conferences and training programs for women and for men.

3 A worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature

Foster the use of Bahá'í literature, especially in local languages, supplemented as need be by tape recordings and visual aids.

Improve the distribution of Bahá'í literature by taking specific steps, such as the establishment of regional depots where necessary, and the education of Local Spiritual Assemblies in the responsibilities to acquaint the friends with Bahá'í literature and ensure its easy availability.

Produce greater supplies of Bahá'í literature in accordance with well-thought-out plans of translation, production and distribution.

Produce, where required for translations into vernacular languages, simplified versions of the Sacred Scriptures, the writings of the Guardian and the statements of the Universal House of Justice.

Establish Bahá'í lending libraries.

4 Further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities

Adopt specific programs to assist and encourage the development of isolated enters into groups, and groups into communities with Local Spiritual Assemblies, resulting in a steady increase of such Assemblies.

Adopt specific goals and programs to consolidate and strengthen Local Spiritual Assemblies, so that they will:

Hold regular meetings with harmonious and productive consultation,

Properly organize and conduct the work of their Secretariat and Treasury,

Appoint and coordinate the work of local committees for special aspects of their work, such as teaching, child education, youth activities, literature distribution, etc.,

Win the respect and confidence of their local communities so that the believers will turn to them for the resolution of problems and advice in their services to the Cause,

Where appropriate, acquire and develop the use of local centers,

Obtain incorporation or equivalent recognition as a legal entity,

Exercise their responsibilities in relation to marriages, births, transfers of membership, marriages and deaths.

Adopt specific goals and programs to consolidate communities with Local Spiritual Assemblies so that the believers will be encouraged to:

Attend regularly Nineteen Day Feasts and the observances of Bahá'í Holy Days, and enhance the spiritual quality of such gatherings,

Pursue local teaching and deepening activities,

Foster the realization of the equality of men and women,

Develop local activities for children and youth,

Support the fund,

Carry out extension teaching projects.

Develop the functioning of National Spiritual Assemblies, adopting specific plans and programs to:

Improve their standard of united, productive, loving consultation,

Develop efficiently functioning national secretariats,

Enhance the standard of the functioning of national treasuries and promote the goal of financial independence of the national Bahá'í community,

Appoint strong national committees to carry out, under the general supervision of the

National Spiritual Assembly, the many specialized aspects of the work of the Cause, including the detailed planning and prompt execution of the work necessary to achieve all the goals of the Six Year Plan.

Acquire, where needed and feasible, national and local properties, such as Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, teaching institutes, summer schools, Bahá'í cemeteries, etc. and ensure their proper care and maintenance.

Obtain, where legally possible, official recognition for Bahá'í marriage and holy days and exemption from the payment of taxes on Bahá'í institutions and their activities.

Ensure the rapid and regular dissemination of news to all believers.

Hold regular, well-planned and well-run summer and winter schools and conferences at costs and in localities which will permit the largest attendance.

Encourage collaboration between or amongst Local Spiritual Assemblies in mutually agreed projects.

Develop and administer correspondence courses for teaching and deepening.

5 Greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers

Promote universal participation in the life of the Faith and an increased sense of their Bahá'í identity among children, youth and adults.

Encourage, where feasible, the practice of dawn prayer.

Encourage individual believers to adopt teaching goals for themselves.

Carry out activities designed to deepen the believers in both a spiritual and intellectual understanding of the Cause.

Encourage believers to make greater use of Bahá'í literature.

Encourage the believers to enhance their command of language to assist them to understand the Bahá'í writings ever more clearly.

Develop and foster Bahá'í scholarship and lend support to the Associations for Bahá'í Studies.

Foster obedience to the Bahá'í laws of personal behavior such as abstention from the drinking of alcoholic beverages and from the taking of habit-forming drugs, and inspire the believers to follow the Bahá'í way of life.

6 A wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth, and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life

Encourage the holding of regular classes for the Bahá'í education of children.

Develop systematic lesson plans and other materials for the Bahá'í education of children.

Train believers to teach Bahá'í children's classes.

Establish a program for the guidance of parents, especially mothers, in the care and training of Bahá'í children.

Sponsor institutes on Bahá'í marriage and family life.

Encourage community activities involving Bahá'í families.

7 The pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities

Encourage Local Spiritual Assemblies and the rank and file of the believers to consider ways in which they can advance the social and economic development of their communities.

Establish tutorial schools and preschools where needed and feasible.

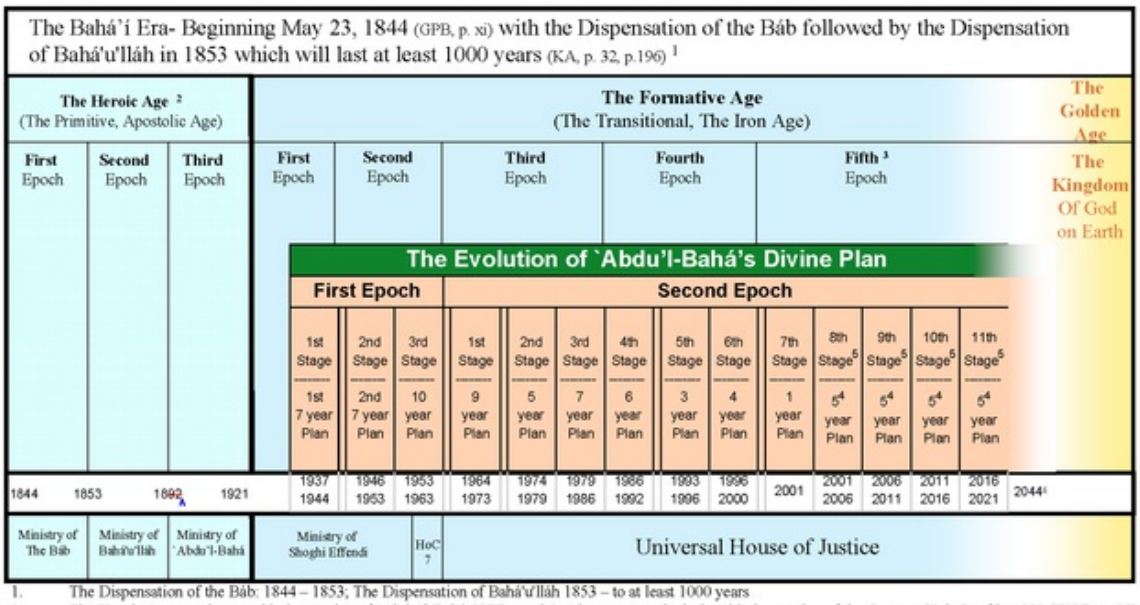
Encourage and sponsor adult literacy programs where needed, especially for women.

Foster collaboration with other agencies involved in social and economic development in areas where the Bahá'í communities can contribute to the work.

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

February 25. On this date in 1922, the text of Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament was received in New York, addressed by Shoghi Effendi to "The Beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States of America and Canada."

Original file: 0069.html (position #30)

February 25. On this date in 1922, the text of Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* was received in New York, addressed by Shoghi Effendi to "The Beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States of America and Canada."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá's *Will and Testament*, his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, and Bahá’u’lláh’s *Tablet of Carmel* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá’í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order.

On January 7, 1922, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament&oldid=745828715#Will_and_Testament_of_‘Abdu’l-Bahá)* was publicly read.

Although in the *Kitáb-i-'Ahd* Bahá'u'lláh designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor in his *Will,* 'Abdu'l-Bahá reprimands his brother as "The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief" and establishes the institution of the Guardianship#Will*and_Testament_of*.E2.80.98Abdu.E2.80.99l-Bah.C3.A1), appointing Shoghi Effendi to this newly-created office.

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker. They arrived in Haifa on December 29.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, addressed to Shoghi Effendi, was read on January 7, 1922, a few days after Shoghi Effendi's arrival in Haifa. *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and its Immediate Consequences*

While the Guardianship&oldid=745828715#Shoghi_Effendi_Defines_the_Guardian) was to be a perpetual institution of the Administrative Order, it ceased to exist after the death of Shoghi Effendi because he died having violated Bahá'u'lláh's command in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* that "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will." Having no children of his own and having declared every living male descendant of Bahá'u'lláh a Covenant-breaker, Shoghi Effendi left no eligible candidates for the office of Guardian, posing a serious problem given his assertion that "In this Dispensation, divine guidance flows on to us in this world after the Prophet's ascension, through first the Master, and then the Guardians." He had furthermore stated in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* that

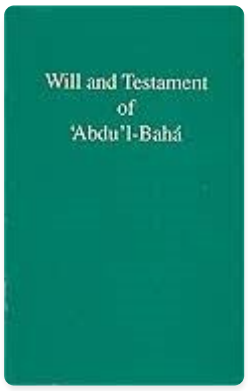
> *Divorced from the institution of the* Guardianship&oldid=745828715) *the* World Order of Bahá'u'lláh *would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an*

> *uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.*

So fundamental was the office of the Guardianship&oldid=745828715#Shoghi_Effendi_Defines_the_Guardian) , that Bahá'í literature was significantly altered subsequent to Shoghi Effendi's death, with the notable removal of references to "The First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith," the "first and present Guardian," and "the lineage of succeeding Guardians." In some cases, references to the Guardian have been replaced or amended with "the Universal House of Justice" and in other instances references to the duties of the Guardian that were in the present tense have been changed to the past tense, indicating that the Guardianship has ceased.

From 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament*

> *O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another* branch *to succeed him."*



Comments

February 25. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter marking the publication of "Who is Writing the Future?", which was published to mark the end of the 20th Century.

Original file: 0068.html (position #29)

February 25. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter marking the publication of "Who is Writing the Future?", which was published to mark the end of the 20th Century.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *25 February 1999*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friends,*
>
> *The year 2000 will conclude the hundred years that 'Abdu'l-Bahá described as "the century of light." His perspective on the twentieth century offers Bahá'ís and Bahá'í*

communities an opportunity to participate meaningfully in many of the activities and discussions expected to take place around the world over the coming two years.

To assist the friends in this respect, the Universal House of Justice has asked the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information to prepare the enclosed document, "Who is Writing the Future?" As you will see, it both examines the events of the twentieth century in the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, and relates these developments to the challenges facing humanity at century's end. Its purpose is to serve as a source of ideas, perspectives, images, and language that will stimulate a wide range of creative responses among Bahá'ís.

The sponsorship of millennial activities will, of course, be the concern of non-Bahá'í groups, but the House of Justice believes that such activities can be seen by Bahá'ís and the Bahá'í communities as creating occasions whose effectiveness can be enhanced by Bahá'í contributions. Given the great diversity of our community's resources, National Spiritual Assemblies will want to ensure that ample latitude is given for a wide range of responses by individual believers and groups. Artists, writers, musicians and dramatists will no doubt find the enclosed document highly stimulating and will readily identify ways in which its themes can be introduced into activities organized by government agencies and various private bodies. It is likely that programs of scholarly associations will also present a range of opportunities for qualified believers to draw attention to Bahá'í perspectives on the current world situation. Your Assembly may wish to address special messages to groups in your own country, adapting elements of the document's theme to this purpose.

In order that such efforts enjoy broad support within the Bahá'í community, it will be important for the friends to understand the message being communicated. Consequently, consideration should be given to ways of incorporating the material in the enclosed document into Bahá'í summer school programs and local study activities.

As you will note, "Who is Writing the Future?" has been cast in the form of a message addressed to non-Bahá'í readers. This has been done primarily in order to make the material most readily useful to Bahá'ís participating in the various events marking the beginning of the new millennium. Should your Assembly feel, however, that the document would also be useful as a booklet or brochure, there is no objection to your publishing it. In that case, although the design is left to your

> *discretion, the text should be used in its present form, without editing, commentary, or supplementary material.*
>
> *Whatever their various forms of belief, our fellow human beings are looking to the immediate future with mingled feelings of tentative hope and deep anxiety. This circumstance offers Bahá'ís a unique opportunity to share with them the Teachings that give meaning to this critical moment in human history.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*

On September 11, 1912, The Montreal Daily Star reported the following exchange: ""Are there any signs that the permanent peace of the world will be established in anything like a reasonable period?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá was asked. "It will be established in this century," he answered, 'It will be universal in the twentieth century. All nations will be forced into it.'"

In 1954 Ramona Allen Brown made a Bahá'í pilgrimage during which Shoghi Effendi told her "Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home" including such statements as "It is not enough to be good and kind and to lead a religious life today; it does not count for much unless one accepts the Manifestation of God, if one has heard of Him; it is almost wasted. **One must accept the Manifestation in His day**"; "All men are not of the same capacity"; "Every city, every town, and every village will have a [Bahá'í] Temple and a House of Justice in the future"; and **"It is essential that the youth of today study deeply the Faith as they will usher in the Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace will be established within this century. The Most Great Peace in the next century"**

On July 29, 1974, the Universal House of Justice admitted "It is true that Abdu'l-Bahá made statements linking the establishment of the unity of nations to the twentieth century...world unity, which, as Abdu'l-Bahá assures us, will, in this century, be securely established."

On April 19, 2001, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter regarding "the timing for the occurrence of the Lesser Peace, in light of your impression that the Bahá'í Writings anticipate its coming before the conclusion of the twentieth century; i.e., the end of December 2000."

On January 31, 1985, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Lesser Peace itself will

pass through stages: at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have a direct influence on it in ways indicated by Shoghi Effendi in his 'The Goal of a New World Order'"

1430. The Lesser Peace Will Initially Be a Political Unity

"Bahá'u'lláh's principal mission in appearing at this time in human history is the realization of the oneness of mankind and the establishment of peace among the nations; therefore, all the forces which are focused on accomplishing these ends are influenced by His Revelation. We know, however, that peace will come in stages. ***First, there will come the Lesser Peace, when the unity of nations will be achieved, then gradually the Most Great Peace-- the spiritual as well as social and political unity of mankind, when the Bahá'í World Commonwealth, operating in strict accordance with the laws and ordinances of the Most Holy Book of the Bahá'í Revelation, will have been established through the efforts of the Bahá'ís.***

"As to the ***Lesser Peace, Shoghi Effendi has explained that this will initially be a political unity arrived at by decision of the governments of various nations; it will not be established by direct action of the Bahá'í community.*** *This does not mean, however, that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of mankind. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the groundwork for a permanent peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal.*

*"**The Lesser Peace itself will pass through stages: at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have a direct influence on it in ways indicated by Shoghi Effendi in his 'The Goal of a New World Order'.** In connection with the steps that will lead to this latter stage, the Universal House of Justice will certainly determine what has to be done, in accordance with the guidance in the Writings, such as the*

> *passage you quoted from 'Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh', page 89. In the meantime, the Bahá'ís will undoubtedly continue to do all in their power to promote the establishment of peace."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, January 31, 1985: Ibid.)*

Comments

February 25. On this date in 2003, an article in the Tribune titled "Mixed messages: With a nation divided on the need for war with Iraq, how do religious leaders address the subject? Or should they at all?" quoted "Evanston's Bahai community" as saying "mankind needs this kind of thing to learn."

Original file: 0067.html (position #28)

February 25. On this date in 2003, the Chicago Tribune carried an article titled "Mixed messages: With a nation divided on the need for war with Iraq, how do religious leaders address the subject? Or should they at all?" quoted "Evanston's Bahai community" as saying "Although we're very concerned about what's going on in the world and our hearts go out to the people who are directly impacted by this, we are encouraged not to worry because we have a vision of what the world is going to be like when we go through a lot of these difficulties, which frankly we think are inevitable. Unfortunately, history shows us

mankind needs this kind of thing to learn. It's an unfortunate kind of situation. But specifically as far as the war is concerned, the Bahai faith has no position on particular crises and conflicts. We hope and we pray that all conflicts like this will be resolved quickly and as peacefully as possible, and again, we're confident that in spite of these kinds of things that erupt in the world from time to time, we believe that world peace is inevitable."

Mixed messages With a nation divided on the need for war with Iraq, how do religious leaders address the subject? Or should they at all? By Mike Conklin, Robert K. Elder, Raoul V. Mowatt and Patrick T. Reardon, Tribune staff reporters Published February 25, 2003 It's easy enough to preach peace and love in times of international calm. But what to say during prayer services and other religious ceremonies when war seems imminent -- and the nation is divided about its necessity?

That's a question U.S. religious leaders are facing as the Bush administration gears up for a military confrontation with Iraq. How much should preachers say about world tensions when their congregations are likely to be split politically on the course of action the country should take? Are they forced to tiptoe around the subject? Do they preach both sides?

We asked ministers, rabbis, priests and Islamic leaders how they are answering such questions -- and how their fellow believers are responding.

Rev. Hycel B. Taylor

Pilgrim Baptist Church, 3301 S. Indiana Ave.

"Obviously I've spoken against the war in Iraq and apprised the congregation that the Bush administration imposing or forcing the issue of war with Iraq is not consistent with the Gospel we preach in our churches and it's not in the best interest of African-Americans in this country. ... It is our prayer that that will not happen. Our prayers are for Colin Powell, especially.

"Violence begets violence. I'm of the generation that marched with Martin Luther King, and we do not believe it is going to make matters any better. Previous to this, I spent time in Israel before the breakout there and talking to leaders of the Jewish faith and Muslim faith, and there again I've articulated my position on that, that somewhere along the line we need to transcend our boundaries and fights over land and laws. Similarly in Iraq, there have to be spiritual solutions to political problems. I think black people, particularly, will not benefit from this war. So many of our young people will be those who are going to war if we indeed go to war. We've paid enough price in this country without doing that."

Rabbi Asher Lopatin

Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, 540 W. Melrose St.

"I try not to take a political stand. I know you can argue this isn't a political issue, it's a moral issue. In the synagogue, I think most people are in favor of Bush's policies, even if they don't think he's doing a good job of explaining them -- but not everyone is. So I don't advocate a pro-war or anti-war position.

"One of the things that we do that is very important is we say a prayer for the soldiers of the United States and Israel. ... We also say a prayer for the government of the United States, and that's a way of not being political but to really emphasize these are important times and important decisions and we pray that God helps them make the right decisions.

"I don't know if my sermons have touched on Iraq. What they will touch on, now that we're getting closer, is the ethics of war, more general ideas on ethics of war and how to fight an ethical war. But they will not be advocating any position.

"In my congregation, I feel it's counterproductive to advocate any position on the war. My personal position is that I'm a very strong supporter of Bush's policies on the war . . . on Iraq. I'm a big supporter. And I'm very grateful for Bush's support of Israel and I think for the United States, regime change is critical and if it means going to war, that's what it means. ...

"The community is diverse. Everybody needs to feel that their positions are valued and that the rabbi really respects their position. In issues that are this sensitive, the priority I give is that we're all a community even though we disagree. And I want to create a conducive atmosphere for that, so taking on these kinds of important but potentially divisive issues would go against that."

Rev. Bill Burke

Ascension Catholic Church in Oak Park

"I think people can't stand it when they go to church and what's going on in the news is never talked about.

"I've spoken about the war or the possibility of war four times already. It's an important issue that people are thinking about that has obvious ramifications with the teachings of Jesus. You gotta talk about it. For the most part, people were very glad to have it talked about. Very glad.

"I try not to lecture people and take advantage of the fact that I have the microphone, because I know there are differing viewpoints, including among Catholics.

"What I try to do is really entreat people to not make a decision about the war without taking Christ into account. Not only taking him into account and what he taught -- but to put him first. Not last, not whether you're a Republican, Democrat, Independent or whatever -- but start with him. And then I go into things he said and did that I thought would apply.

"People bring up `turn the other cheek,' and they do it in almost a cavalier fashion, as if this had nothing to do with real life. He dealt his whole life with real life. He was constantly trying to find ways around accepted brutalities.

"It doesn't make any sense for us not to do this. We're supposed to be Christians, you can't put him last or in parentheses. Mr. Bush is a Christian and so are any number of people involved in this.

"Generally I got good marks for being fair. Some folks felt that I loaded [my sermons] against the war, and my response was, `I will agree that's what happens when you go through Christ's teachings.' I think he's basically anti-war. Therefore, to make a case for war, you have to show how the evil is so overwhelming you have to do something."

Rev. Joseph Shank

Winnetka Congregational Church

"There have been a couple of things that I've talked about from the pulpit. One issue is the pre-emptive strike and that within the Christian tradition, not simply the pacifist tradition, this philosophy is hard to justify from a church perspective. Now is the time for those of faith to really step out with our faith when it comes to dealing with these monumental issues. I wasn't saying that expecting everyone to agree.

"The other theme that I've preached is trying to remain faithful in the face of great anxiety. For instance, I started my last sermon with: `I come before you without duct tape and plastic sheeting. Because we can't ensure our health, but via our faith, we can maintain a community of well-being. That community, in turn, encourages us and informs us as we live our lives as Christians in the greater world and hopefully reduce anxiety and anger.' That's something Christians can bring to the table.

"The appropriateness [of preaching about the subject of a war with Iraq] gets questioned,

but we are a wonderful congregation with diverse views and opinions. Some people come to worship to make sense out of what is overwhelming us in the world and some people come to see it as a respite or sanctuary.

"So that makes it very hard when you have 300-400 people out there to meet the needs of everyone. That's a concern just as people always wonder about the appropriateness of any issues that are political that also have religious ramifications."

Imam Mohammed Amin Kholwadia

Director of Darul Qasim, an institute for higher learning for Arabic and Islamic studies in Lombard

"I try and stay away from speaking about politics in general inside of the mosque -- especially during prayer time. Outside of prayer time, it's not a problem if I have classes or lectures. I would not shy away from discussing the issue.

"During prayer time, we will mention it, definitely. And if we don't mention it as part of the sermon, it will only be to develop the spirit of the Muslim community towards prayer -- and that they should turn to God for advice and comfort, strength and patience, words to that effect. It will not be something where we make any sort of radical judgment for or against any government in the prayer. It'll just be for the well-being of every human being.

"[Outside of prayer] we approach it from the universal perspective, how does [war] affect mankind in general and what are the Islamic universal values? And how those values filter, one way or the other, which particular is right or wrong morally -- maybe not politically or legally, but morally?

"We do have discussions and people do ask questions, very specific questions as to if this pending war is just or unjust. About two months ago, people were asking . . . is this the way to go? We would say, if there is no evidence which leads to someone being a threat or a potential threat, it is not valid enough to justify a pre-emptive strike.

"There are issues about civil rights that touch us very, very deeply in the community and people's rights have been violated. People have been detained. Those are some of the apprehensions people in the audience have."

Rev. Alan Gates

Holy Spirit Episcopal Church in Lake Forest (Gates is a former intelligence analyst for the state department and defense department)

"Our Episcopal leadership is calling on the president to exhaust all diplomatic and multilateral initiatives as the alternative to waging war. Our local sentiment echoes this call. The forbearance of the powerful in using their power is a strong Christian statement, and one we hope our nation will make."

Gates faxed a copy of a sermon he recently delivered to his congregation:

"We are all aware that our nation may well be engaged in one of the defining moments of our history. The decisions which are being weighed these days are vexing. The only people I know who see the issues as being altogether simple are those who, for the sake of that simplicity, are willing to ignore one set of questions or the other.

"For myself, my years of working for our government in military intelligence have made me unable to embrace what seems to me the naivete of a purely pacifist position. On the other hand, those same years with intelligence make me keenly aware of our government's ability to seek out and consider only that data which supports the position it has already staked out. A critically discerning ear directed towards the pronouncements of the churches is not un-Christian; a critically discerning ear directed towards the pronouncements of our government officials is not unpatriotic.

"The Gospel demands that we work for justice and peace. But in the past 18 months we have found ourselves in that anguished bewilderment which has faced our friends on both sides of the Middle Eastern conflict for the past 50 years -- what to do when justice and peace seem to be at odds with one another. For peace without genuine security is an illusion, and is not peace. But security bought at the price of oppression is also illusory, and is not just."

Rev. John Buchanan

Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago, 126 E. Chestnut St.

"I think that every Sunday since the crisis has emerged and heated up we have continued to pray for peace, and in addition prayed for the president and his advisers and for the secretary of state and the important decisions they're in the process of making. We have prayed every Sunday for the men and women in our armed services and their families, and we have prayed for the Iraqi people and their leaders and we have prayed for the United Nations.

"Sermonically, the Sundays I've been in the pulpit, I've in fact alluded to the possibility of war, hopefully in a balanced way. I have indicated the religious leaders of our

denomination, and others have with one voice been asking the administration to slow down and give inspections a chance. The United Nations and the Security Council are where I hope and we hope our nation invests a little more energy. I've alluded to the fact that war, even when it's necessary, is always something of a failure and Christians need to remember that and Christians need to support and go to war only with enormous regret and only after exhausting every other possibility.

"[Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld] is a member of this congregation and does stay somewhat in touch with us, but I don't presume to offer my opinions. He does know what I've said from the pulpit and we've corresponded several times throughout this crisis.

"Any Christian minister starts off from the perspective of the Bible and the biblical witness in times of international conflict. And I think you speak out of your own theological tradition and then you speak from your heart. You speak what your conscience leads you to say. Sometimes that's not easy. Sometimes that's not what people want to hear. But in this case, I've not had a lot of objections to what I've said. I take that to mean that people are troubled and concerned and not in a hurry. I take that to mean people want us to continue to work through the United Nations and our allies."

Imam Senad Agic

Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago in Northbrook.

"I'm trying not to elaborate on political issues. That's not helpful. We cannot solve the problem in mosques. Muslims should organize themselves in other ways, on a more professional level and address political issues and try to solve them -- not in mosques, not from the pulpits. Because there are many unqualified preachers, lay leaders, who don't know much about religion and then they compensate that with talk about politics. It's something that offends in our mosque. Many mosques, they don't have their own appointed, trained imams. I'm a trained one, but I avoid speaking about politics. I know enough about religion to speak."

Rev. Greg Dell

Broadway United Methodist Church, 3344 N. Broadway

"In my preaching, I've spent some time a number of Sundays talking about what I saw as the really demonic dynamics around the plans for the war in Iraq. This past Sunday, for instance, the scripture was related to a figure in the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Testament, whose arrogance almost got in the way of his healing. In the sermon, I talked about the sin

of arrogance and the unwillingness of people to understand their commonality and the importance of listening to one another as they approach these kind of critical issues, and to be so arrogant as though one nation could operate as though it had the correct answer for all the other nations of the world regardless of what they said was an example of the kind of arrogance that we as Christians needed to take a hard look to see if we could in fact support that kind of arrogance. However we saw the evil that's expressed in the government of Iraq, the question is how one responds to that evil. It should be done with a bit more humility than the United States has done heretofore.

"For me as a pastor, the Gospel, our Christian faith, is a faith that relates to all aspects of our life. It relates to us individually as we explore our own personhood, it relates to our relationships with other persons, it relates to our society and it relates to our world. God didn't say I'm interested only in individuals and I don't care about the rest. When Jesus continually talked about God's realm, that was a realm that intersected with human realms as well. That meant human government. So if there's an evil, it can't be reduced to simply an individual evil. We're called to wrestle with all the problems of the world from the standpoint of our faith. And there are few that are more critical to us right now than the issues around the escalating war with Iraq.

"It's one thing for a preacher or individuals in the congregation or even committees in the congregation to say we've done some study and we feel it necessary to share our opinion or at least our perspective. It's my job as the preacher to make sure that's informed by scripture and is not merely a political opinion. Finally, only the congregation collectively can speak its own mind. No preacher, no pastor should ever speak for the congregation, nor should any small group. At least that's the way we see it. So as the congregation listens to me, as it listens to others who have different points of view on matters of faith as well as matters of the war, it will come to its own decision.

"Whenever any destructive power is at work, we are called as a people of faith to respond to it. That's our foundation. Then the question is, what's the best way to do that? Is the best way to do that to take a unilateral action against a nation that we armed in the first place? Is it perhaps to go ahead and, based on an interpretation of the just war idea, to say the human suffering that will be caused by an attack has to be assumed because of the greater evil that lies out there? Those are the questions that have to be explored."

Rabbi Michael Siegel

Anshe Emet Synagogue, 3760 N. Pine Grove Ave.

"The Jewish law offers an approach to meaningful issues that I believe we would do well to concern ourselves with. I make a strong effort to teach from the pulpit so that people can explore issues in a fuller, and perhaps more thoughtful, way.

"My own opinion is, Saddam Hussein has shown himself to be someone who we might put into a category of almost abnormal or radical evil, whether it's using non-conventional weapons against his own people or showing his willingness to go to war in his own area of the world against Kuwait. The environment in which we live, that is to say, the environment of global terrorism, is one in which if Saddam Hussein is not actively working with Osama bin Laden, one can see they have similar goals in mind. My own sense is the Bush administration is correct in its assessment of Saddam Hussein and the danger he represents, not only in the Middle East but in the world community. We have an obligation to stand up in the face of evil and use whatever means we can to stop it before it spreads. . . .

"I think that war is never a good option. War is sometimes the only option. The fact of the matter is no one who is a believer wants to be a proponent of war. I don't feel that's something I want to support myself. What we're talking about here is a war that is being foisted upon us by what is truly an evil regime. And probably the reason why those in the faith community are not being more outspoken is there's a terrible irony in being someone who believes in God, believes in human rights, who believes in the dignity of humankind being an advocate of a war. But my own study of at least the Jewish approach toward war and my own understanding of the present situation leads me to that conclusion, sadly and I think to a certain extent, tragically."

Rev. Edward Curtis

Grace Episcopal Church, 637 S. Dearborn St.

"Like many preachers, I find irony that the Martin Luther King holiday came in the middle of this ramp-up. I just quoted King on that Sunday a couple weeks ago. . . . I tried to channel as much of him as I could, and people got it. If he were alive today, he wouldn't be holding President Bush's hand in the White House, because he'd be out there really fomenting against this because of what this does to the poor, what it does to us as human beings, and just the injustices of it. Several people in our parish, probably six or seven of us went to that interfaith prayer vigil for peace.

"It's a spirituality of what war is really about. Organized violence in the service of politics just needs to be exposed for what it is. I think certainly the Christian message is one of

peace and justice, not one of violence. As I understand Christianity, giving one's life is a noble thing and Christians say it was a salvific thing when Jesus did it. But taking someone's life is a whole other issue . . . .

"I think the issue is not about evil out there somewhere in the world and we have to go out and kill it. I think that spiritual development is that we realize that evil exists in our own hearts and we help create the very Frankensteins we want to go and destroy. And you can make a case in history of how Iraq was created by the Western colonial powers and how we helped arm this man during a previous war, and now we seek to destroy him. It's got sort of a cosmic, mythological feel to it when you put it in those terms. . . .

"I know other churches and other Episcopalians can add up the facts in different ways and read the history different ways. I don't begrudge them that. I just try to be, as I told my congregation, a small lone voice in the midst of all this cacophony about `Let's go get them.'"

Rev. Bob Baker

Vineyard Church of DuPage, 25W560 Geneva Rd., Suite 13, Carol Stream

"We do mention what's going on but as far as coming to a viewpoint on it, probably not too much. We're a little too -- how would you say it -- I don't know if `quietist' is the right way to put it. Maybe apolitical, that's a better name to give it.

"I know the stakes are high, but I feel we are responsible to be aware and to be praying and caring for the people. Praying for the leaders is definitely something the Bible talks about. But when it comes to being able to decide complex issues like this . . . we . . . don't really feel it's our job to come down on either side, unless you get to the point like it did in the day of Hitler and others when it becomes obvious that you need to give some kind of viewpoint on someone who can cause that much harm to people. I guess that's my rationale to the degree I've grappled with it.

"Last week, I said I could bring up the subject of Iraq and I'll bet you there'd be quite a few people on either side in this room. And there would be, because I know we have some pretty conservative Republicans and there are others -- I don't know what they are politically but one couple was at the protest in Washington.

"My hope is that those who are making these decisions are weighing both sides, and we're just praying that the Lord would give them wisdom.

Rabbi Doug Zelden

Ezras Israel, in West Rogers Park

"I address it on a regular basis . . . generally on Saturday mornings. [I approach] it as: How does it affect us as individuals? How does it affect us as a Jewish community in America? Does it become more of a threat to us?

"I address things head-on. I often speak in story form and bring allegorical stories to what I'm speaking about. I tell it like it is, in my opinion. I also believe I say things people want to hear. If I think what I'm saying is controversial, I'll be happy to say it. But I not going to say something that I think is controversial to the point of others all disagreeing with me. As a rabbi, I'm a spiritual leader. I'm not going to cause conflict within my community speaking in a way that will offend others. I approach it head-on, more factual rather than opinion.

"Everyone is a little bit scared, a little bit cautious. But I think people really don't want war. War brings on thoughts of further hate and conflict. I think people generally do not want war. The recent anti-war demonstrations across the country, in the world and in England have really spoken loudly for people's opinions. People don't want war right now and patience is really what they are looking for. They are scared that war will bring more conflict, more hate and there's enough of that in the world right now.

"I'm kind of neutral on war. I think if war is necessary to bring peace in the big picture or to save lives -- which is what I think President Bush is saying -- those are valid concerns. But I think there's not enough evidence of that now.

Rev. C. Frank Phillips

St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church, 825 N. Carpenter St.

"Every Sunday at mass, we remind the people to pray the rosary every day for peace. We put in our [weekly bulletin] to pray for peace in the world, and that our civil leaders are guided by the Holy Spirit."

St. John Cantius is an unusual parish that specializes in such traditional pre-Vatican II Catholic practices as the Latin mass and the Divine Office. Its members come from throughout the city and suburbs, Phillips said, and represent a wide range in terms of education and economic status.

In his references to the potential for war in his Sunday homilies, Phillips follows the lead of

Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Francis George. "War should be avoided at all cost," he said.

Indeed, a war would have a direct impact on many parish members. "Many people here are involved in the military themselves, and have been called to serve already," Phillips said. He has a list of nearly 100 names of parishioners, friends and family members now serving in uniform.

But, after the trauma of Sept. 11, 2001, there is the sense among Phillips' parishioners, as among all Americans, that any military conflict could hit home in the form of a terrorist attack. "The Hancock Center is 10 blocks away from us," he said. "If anybody hit the Hancock Center, we would be in the direct line of falling debris."

And that prompts a fear, Phillips said, that runs counter to the message of the Gospels. "As individuals who are followers of Christ, we always have to be people of hope," he said.

Yet, also, he said, there is the need to be prepared for the worst. "If we really believe our Lord is with us, if he calls us tonight, we should be ready. If he calls us tomorrow, we should be ready."

Morris Taylor

Member of the administrative body of Evanston's Bahai community.

Although we're very concerned about what's going on in the world and our hearts go out to the people who are directly impacted by this, we are encouraged not to worry because we have a vision of what the world is going to be like when we go through a lot of these difficulties, which frankly we think are inevitable. Unfortunately, history shows us mankind needs this kind of thing to learn. It's an unfortunate kind of situation. But specifically as far as the war is concerned, the Bahai faith has no position on particular crises and conflicts. We hope and we pray that all conflicts like this will be resolved quickly and as peacefully as possible, and again, we're confident that in spite of these kinds of things that erupt in the world from time to time, we believe that world peace is inevitable.

Jeff Hammond, pastor, Horizon Christian Community Church, Round Lake Beach.

I could preach about war in general or the relationship of the church to the state in general and talk about "principles", but I would be wrong to tell people that God is for the war or that God is against the war. I am not here to tell people what to think, but I'm here to equip people with tools necessary to do their own living. I help people understand the Bible

or I help organize believers into a community ... but I don't determine the choices of individuals nor do I determine how they think or feel. All I can do is say, "Here's the message of the Bible" and then let them apply it in their own way. . . .

My opinion is that a war against Saddam should be executed regardless of popular opinion for the sake of 1) disrupting a known terrorist-harboring and supporting state and 2) to free the people of Iraq from a murderous oppressor so they can govern themselves. . . .

I guess the main thought I have is that we pastors and Christians in general must still be humble when approaching hot topics remembering that our opinions are not necessarily God's plans. And we always have to be gracious even with our enemies.

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Comments

February 25. On this date in 2001, The Tennessean newspaper's Dining In column featured an article titled "Flavors Provide Persian Excursion Aram Ferdowsi's Use Of Spices, Attention To Tradition Yields Soulful Dining Experience" featuring the Ferdowsi family of Brentwood, Tennessee.

Original file: 0066.html (position #27)

February 25. On this date in 2001, *The Tennessean* newspaper's Dining In column featured an article titled "Flavors Provide Persian Excursion Aram Ferdowsi's Use Of Spices, Attention To Tradition Yields Soulful Dining Experience" featuring the Ferdowsi family of Brentwood, Tennessee.

Flavors Provide Persian Excursion Aram Ferdowsi's Use Of Spices, Attention To Tradition Yields Soulful Dining Experience

Column: DINING IN

Aram Ferdowsi [daughter of Amin Jazab], like the Persian food she often prepares, is both beautiful and extraordinary. She, like the painstakingly intricate food she presents, is an exotic blend of cultures that touch the soul as well as the senses.

A native of Iran, she grew up in Zaire, Africa, and considers it her home.

"I was 11 when my family moved to Zaire. My sister and I hated it the entire first year we were there. The poverty was overwhelming and it was a French-speaking country. (But) we fell in love with the country and its people, and I treasured the remainder of my years there," said the Brentwood resident.

Her father was a physician and her mother, a pharmacist. They served as missionaries for the Baha'i faith in the United States, Tunisia and then Zaire. Ferdowsi speaks of her years in Zaire, and the countless contributions her parents made, with admiration, fondness and longing.

"I saw firsthand how one educated person can affect the lives of masses. It was my dream and intention to go to a developing country myself after college and change lives as my parents have," she said.

A kind of evolution

Aram was a freshman at Vanderbilt University when she met Farsheed Ferdowsi, a meeting that would ultimately change her life.

"Oh, we had an initial conversation of perhaps five minutes in which he said, 'I would never marry a Persian girl.' How rude, I thought. I had no interest in marriage to him or anyone else. Besides, already at that point I considered myself a Western woman in Persian looks," she said.

The two bumped into each other on campus occasionally, and when Farsheed went to graduate school at Berkley he left some plants in Aram's care.

"He used to call to check on his plants. When he returned from Berkley, we dated for a year and then married. I married on the condition that I would go on to medical school and we would move to a developing country.

"Here it is 21 years later, and we're right here in Brentwood," she said with a warm laugh.

During their courtship, Farsheed was the cook.

"He would bring these intricate Persian dishes over, beautifully presented. I remember he made a Persian potato salad, topped with roses carved from radishes, and rich souffls. I honestly did not cook. In Zaire, everything was made from scratch and dishes and meals were very difficult.

"My sister had an innate flair for the cooking, but I had none," said the woman who was putting finishing touches on a luncheon fit for royalty.

Persian food requires multi-layered preparation.

"For a full, intricate Persian meal, days of preparation are required. Persian cooking has been around for thousands of years, and for much of that time, it was the only way women had to express their talents," she said as she dusted crushed rose petals over a bowl of yogurt.

Aram and Farsheed's children, Donesh who is 12, and Kimia, 16, love Persian food.

"I prepare it a couple of times a month. I could not have it every evening. It is just too time-consuming," she said as she heated water in a samovar for hot tea that would be served after lunch.

Family ways

Just as Aram dreamed of returning to a developing nation to change and improve lives as her parents have done, Kimia seems to wear the mantle of giving, as well. The Harpeth Hall Sophomore spent three weeks in Africa last summer as part of a missionary trip.

"I wanted her to have an introduction to that feeling of helping during her early years. She loved Africa. She was one of about 10 kids who went. Some unrest in the country, but not near where they were, occurred and many parents had their children come home. We allowed Kimia to stay because I knew where she was and knew she was safe," she said.

Aram, who had shunned cooking until she was married, took on the task in a large way.

"Food is the hub of Persian life and family life. When family comes to visit, family comes to visit. Suddenly, we were planning for a visit of about 30 family members. I certainly credit my sisters-in- law for teaching me to cook," she laughed.

In day-to-day cooking, she prefers fresh, always, and no-fuss meals.

"I don't like to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, but of course I do so when I prepare Persian meals," she said.

Persian foods use unique spicing. Saffron is used a great deal as is a spice named fenugrek. A meal always includes fresh vegetables. A bowl with artfully arranged spring onions and radishes accompanied her luncheon.

"Persians do not eat many lettuces, and when we do, it is usually something like Romaine that we dip in a syrup like sauce. It is delicious. Persians eat a lot of green, for example this kuku we are going to have," she said as she sauted the quiche-like consistency in a pan.

Donesh had prepared the salad of fresh cucumbers and tomatoes. The delicious dressing was made of olive oil, lemon juice and dried mint.

Rose petals are used for garnish, and rose water is usually added to hot tea.

"Most of our desserts have rose water, as well. They, too, are multi-step dishes," she said.

Around the table

As the tea steeped and the aroma and essence of the leaves mingled with the aromas of the food, we sat down to a glorious meal of a richly flavored chicken dish, rice, the green kuku, Donesh's salad, the fresh vegetables and yogurt sprinkled with crushed rose petals.

The food was beautiful, rich and exotic. The flavors were an excursion to a foreign land. The rich and aromatic tea we took afterward was served in clear glass cups, a Persian tradition.

"Persians put a sugar cube in their mouths and drink the tea over it, but certainly, you might want to just add a cube directly to your cup," she said with a warm chuckle.

The gold-rimmed cups were beautiful and the tea a delight. Over tea, she spoke of travel. The Ferdowsi's believe in the priceless value of travel and the way it enriches their children's lives. Much of their travel is to Turkey, Israel, Africa and Europe.

"We do love travel. And I suppose I still have the dream of someday living in an emerging country, doing something as potent as my dad and mother have, giving and receiving from a people; changing lives, ours and theirs," she said softly as she sipped her tea.

Herb kuku

(pronounced like "cukoo" in a cukoo clock)

Herb kuku is a traditional New Year's dish in Iran, where the new year begins on March 21, the first day of spring. The green of the herbs symbolize rebirth, while the eggs represent fertility and happiness for the coming year.

6 eggs

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon cumin

2 crushed garlic cloves

1 cup finely chopped fresh chives or green onions

1 cup finely chopped fresh parsley

1 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves

1/2 cup finely chopped spinach

1/2 cup floppy lettuce leaf

1 cup chopped fresh dill (or 1/2 cup dry)

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon dried fenugreek (optional)

1/2 cup oil

Preheat oven to 350. Break eggs into large bowl. Add baking powder, cinnamon, cumin, salt and pepper. Beat with a fork.

Add garlic, chopped herbs, spinach, fenugreek and flour. Mix thoroughly.

Pour 1/4 cup of the oil into an 8-inch ovenproof baking dish and place it in oven for 10-15 minutes. Pour in the egg mixture and bake uncovered for 30 minutes on middle rack.

Remove the dish from oven and gently pour the remaining oil over the kuku. Put dish back in oven and bake for and additional 20-30 minutes, until golden brown.

Serve kuku in baking dish or unmold it by loosening the edge with a knife and inverting it onto a serving platter. Can be enjoyed hot or cold.

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Comments

February 25. On this date in 1889, the British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne gave a lecture to Pembroke College Literary Society, during which the Bahá'í Faith was discussed at length. This talk qualifies as the earliest mention of the Bahá'í Faith in the West.

Original file: 0065.html (position #26)

February 25. On this date in 1889, the eminent British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne gave a lecture to Pembroke College Literary Society - known as the 'Martlets' - during which the Bahá'í Faith was discussed at length. This was a semi-private meeting, but it qualifies as the earliest mention of the Faith. Edward Granville Browne published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá'u'lláh and leave a description of the experience.

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled BROWNE, EDWARD GRANVILLE...

I. Browne's Life and Academic Career

E. G. Browne came of a wealthy family engaged in shipbuilding. He was at first strongly dominated by his father, Sir Benjamin Browne, who sent him to the preparatory school at Glenalmond, to Eton College, and finally to Cambridge University, where he was to study engineering or, as an ultimate compromise, science and medicine. The boy followed his father's wishes and eventually qualified, and for a short time practiced, as a doctor. But at the age of only fifteen, in 1877, his interest in the Middle East had been aroused by the Russo-Turkish War, in which characteristically his sympathy lay with the side that was unpopular in Britain, the Turks. At this point his "Oriental" studies began, with Turkish, to which Persian and Arabic were soon added. He had (and continued to have) little or no interest in philology as such, and his methods seem to have been entirely pragmatic: the autodidactic use of any manuals and texts he could find, consultation with real and pretended experts, and the genial exploitation of various native speakers, who could nearly always be found in England in the great days of empire. The results, to judge by the reports of his contemporaries and his own published work, were stupendously successful.

Upon his graduation in the Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos in 1882, he was "bribed" by his father to persevere in his medical studies with the gift of a summer trip to Istanbul (or, as it was still known in Europe, Constantinople). In 1884, on his own initiative, he also took the so-called "Indian" Languages (in fact, languages of the Islamic world) Tripos at Cambridge. There followed three years of further medical study, internship, and practice, interrupted, whenever the occasion allowed, for pursuit of his private, "Oriental" interests. In 1887 be achieved both his final medical qualifications and a fellowship from his Cambridge college (Pembroke), which enabled him to spend his celebrated year in Iran—for it was by then unquestionably Persian studies that were claiming his main attention. It was this visit that generated the remarkable book, *A Year Amongst the Persians,* which, despite its romantic and archaic title, approach, and style, remains a classic source. It was first published in 1893, after being more than once turned down, and has since been reprinted several times under various auspices (chiefly A. C. Black and Cambridge University Press).

After his return to Britain in 1888, Browne's life was spent almost wholly in Cambridge, remaining outwardly quite unspectacular. He was first University Lecturer in Persian and then, from 1902 until his death, Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic; the latter post was one of two prestigious but ill-paid chairs nominally in the field of Arabic studies then maintained in the university. Until 1906 he lived a vigorous, if somewhat self-centered, social life as a bachelor in his college; in that year he married Alice Blackburne-Daniell, a

well-to-do and influential Roman Catholic, who enlisted his vague but generous sympathies both for Roman Catholicism and for the cause of an independent Ireland. They had two sons, neither of whom followed his father's interests, though later both lent them moral and financial support. Browne suffered a massive heart attack in November, 1924; his wife died in June, 1925, six months before his own death. The last year or so of his life was little more than a gallant holding action.

To appreciate Browne's remarkable academic achievements (as well as some of his peculiar shortcomings) at their proper evaluation, it is necessary to understand something of his personal position and the world in which he lived and worked. He was bred to wealth and status and was (particularly in his mature years) a very rich man in his own right. This meant that his time was largely his own (his statutory duties were minimal) and that he could please himself in virtually everything he did and said. He could choose his own projects, pay for them and their publication if necessary (as it often was), and personally employ such colleagues and helpers (several Iranians among them) as the university would not hire. But this situation carried its disadvantage as well. If he was generous and clever and often charming, he was also egotistical (several tributes bear witness to his fascinating but nearly always one-sided discourse); and, as frequently happens in such cases, his judgment could be willful and erratic and the self-discipline necessary for the finest academic work very difficult to achieve. His almost continuous antagonism to his own government and the establishment (related to general Middle Eastern diplomacy and the Persian "Question," Ireland, South Africa—liberals in those days were pro-Boer—anti-Germanism and concomitant pro-Russian and pro-French policy, inadequate educational measures, and so on) largely does him credit, no doubt; it certainly cost him deserved public recognition and influence. It also, however, sometimes contained elements of the arbitrary and the cranky, and anyone less privileged might well have had cause to be more circumspect. As with most of his contemporaries, all his ways seem to have been firmly set before he reached the age of thirty. He had, too, something in him of upper-class Victorian-Edwardian philistinism: Early in life he engaged in tennis, squash, and rowing, and later he took up fishing, but he had no time for art, music, religion, or indeed for languages or cultures outside his chosen field. His early enthusiasm for Turkish studies soon waned, while for "Indian" culture he seemed to cherish a marked antipathy most of his life, considering it to represent a debased version of all that he loved in Iran. He was no sybarite: Given endless cigarettes and tea, he could apparently easily dispense (for himself and his guests) with good food or wine.

Browne's work in promoting Persian studies was epoch-making, for it must be remembered that in his lifetime (and sometimes still) Islamic studies were conceived, as

the title of his chair suggests, primarily in terms of Arabic. His long-time friend, colleague, and successor R. A. Nicholson, a Persianist of almost equal note, included in his introduction to posthumous *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS belonging to the late E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1932) a memoir and almost complete classified bibliography of fifty-five major items that Browne had published. Although these works cannot all be listed here, some of the largest or most important demand comment.

First, unquestionably, is the monumental *Literary History of Persia,* the four volumes of which appeared in 1902, 1906, 1920, and 1924. It is a work that fully displays Browne's strengths and weaknesses: broad in scope (and ranging far beyond literature as such), dense with nearly always accurate detail, and based almost entirely on original sources (many of which were at that time accessible only to Browne himself) but also diffuse and at times irrelevant (volume I, for example, consists largely of prolegomena, though originally intended to comprise the entire work). It also abounds in examples of Browne's and his society's prejudices, as well as reflecting some unfortunate Iranian cultural attitudes of the time (volume IV, for example, though packed with valuable material, does scant justice to the literature, art, and general high culture of the whole period 1500-1900). Volumes II and III, though now dated in information and approach and selective in interest, are fine pieces of work. The copyright to the whole enterprise, which initially had a checkered publishing history, has long been vested in Cambridge University Press, and reprints have been frequent.

Two of Browne's special concerns gave rise to a considerable number of publications from about 1890 to 1920. These concerns were respectively Babism/Bahaism and what he perceived to be the rise of true liberal democracy in Iran (see ii and iii below, with bibliographies). He also edited, translated, and encouraged others to work on a number of important classical texts that had come to his notice during the preparation of his Literary History. Among the most important of his own contributions are editions of *Tadhkiratu ʾsh-Shuʿará* of Dawlatšāh (1901), *Lubábuʾl-Albáb* of ʿAwfī (with Mīrzā Moḥammad Qazvīnī; 2 vols., 1903, 1906), and in the Gibb Memorial Series *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristán* of Ebn Esfandīār (1905), *Taʾríkh-i-Guzīda* of Mostawfī (2 vols., 1910, 1913), and the revised translation of *Čahār maqāla* of Neẓāmī ʿArūżī (*Cahár Maqála,* 1921). Browne's own interest in such works was not always strictly literary, but his use of them was to prove in the long run most fortunate, for they include fine and often rare examples of medieval Persian prose. One anomalous work, *Arabian Medicine* (1921), the publication of his Fitzpatrick lectures before the Royal College of Physicians, represents a marriage of his enforced earlier studies with his own chosen field of endeavor.

Much of Browne's time and phenomenal energy were channeled into helping individuals and causes or carrying out "chores." He gave personal (including financial) assistance to a great variety of students and to Iranian and other émigrés. His role on the Persia Committee, which endeavored for some years (particularly between 1908 and 1912) to influence the British government and public opinion, was crucial—though the ultimate results were disappointing (see iii below). It did, however, win him high regard in Iran, in addition to the respect he already enjoyed among educated Iranians for his dedicated scholarship. He promoted "Oriental" studies at Cambridge in various ways, especially by encouraging academic training for candidates in the Levant Consular Service and the Egyptian, Sudanese, and Indian civil services. Many academic or quasi-academic figures emerged from this unofficial nursery of talent, among them the late Sir Reader Bullard, Laurence Lockhart, and Sir Ronald Storrs. After the early death of the Turcologist E. J. W. Gibb in 1901, Browne took responsibility for putting a large part of Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry* into final form and seeing it through the press. He was the leading executive and academic figure in publishing the invaluable Gibb Memorial Series, from a fund established by Gibb's family in 1904. Finally, it should be mentioned that he did a great deal of cataloguing work on the rich Islamic collections housed in Cambridge, which culminated in his *Handlist of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1900); a supplementary list published in 1922 also included manuscripts located in the individual colleges.

Mention has already been made of the significant failure of British (and indeed foreign) public and academic authorities to honor Browne as fully as might have been expected in the light of his achievements. The following list includes virtually all the significant marks of recognition that came his way: 1903, Fellow of the British Academy; 1911, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; 1922, Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society; 1921, on his fifty-ninth birthday, an address and presentations from admirers in Iran (where he was also made a member of the Order of the Lion and the Sun); on his sixtieth birthday a festschrift entitled *A Volume of Oriental Essays Presented to E. G. Browne* . . . (ed. Sir T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, 1922) but nicknamed *ʿAjab-nāma* (Book of wonders), as a play on his initials. (Typically, this book drew a sour review or two, which, though aimed at the mediocre quality of some of the articles, must inevitably have spoiled Browne's pleasure in the gesture.) Also on this occasion Browne received further letters and addresses from Iran and a number of Western countries. Ironically, his death gave rise to a host of notices conferring upon him the most extravagant praises.

ii. Browne on Babism and Bahaism

Browne first developed an intense curiosity about Babism when he read Gobineau's account in the summer of 1886, and one of his pursuits during his subsequent year-long sojourn in Iran (1887-88) was making contact with the Babis and gaining access to their manuscripts. Browne deeply admired the heroism of the Babis in the revolutionary period 1848-52, found a "sublime beauty" even in the Bab's more ungrammatical writings, and was impressed by Gobineau's account of the Babi leader Ṣobḥ-e Azal. He was thus rather taken aback to discover, upon making contact with "Babis" in Iran, that almost all had become Bahais, followers of Azal's older half-brother Bahāʾ-Allāh, who had replaced the *Bayān* with the *Aqdas* (Browne, 1889, pp. 486-87, 901, 933; idem, 1893, repr. 1926, pp. 328-29).

In true nineteenth-century style, Browne was after the pristine origins of the movement, considering later developments to be departures. He thus considered the Azalīs more reliable than the Bahais in putting him in touch with the Babi past and regretted the rivalry between the two groups. He seems early on to have taken the Azalī side in the struggle; when Iranian Bahais reproached him for inclining to Azal, he did not deny it and blamed Bahai violence toward Azalīs (1893, repr. 1926, pp. 578-79). In his 1889 papers for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* he set out for the first time in English a detailed account of the evolution of Babism and the rise of Bahaism after 1850. He entered into frequent correspondence with Azal and his followers and in the spring of 1890 voyaged to Cyprus, where he spent two weeks with Azal, then to ʿAkkā (Acre), where he spent a week with the Bahais.

Among Browne's Azalī contacts in Istanbul was Shaikh Aḥmad Rūḥī, who told him late in 1890 about a manuscript entitled *Hašt behest*, a polemic against Bahaism. Although this book had just been written by Rūḥī himself and Āqā Khan Kermānī, both sons-in-law of Azal, Rūḥī misrepresented it as the work of Āqā Javād Karbalāʾī, an eyewitness to events of early Babism. Karbalāʾī had become a Bahai, but Rūḥī told Browne that he had been an Azalī. Browne was at first excited by Hašt behešt, wrongly considering it a primary source for early Babi history and a vindication of Azal's right to head Babism after the Bab's death (1892, pp. 680-84, reporting Rūḥī's correspondence); he much later came to realize the true authorship of *Hašt behest* (idem, 1932, p. 76, para. 1; for more recent scholarship on this work and on Kermānī, see Bayat, pp. 160-61).

At ʿAkkā Browne had acquired a copy of the account of Babi and Bahai history by Bahāʾ-Allāh's son ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ, which he published with a translation and extensive annotation, as *A Traveller's Narrative* in 1891. Browne spoke highly of Bahāʾ-Allāh and ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ in his introduction to this work, but the notes (II, pp. 356-73), written later, show a

willingness to believe charges that Bahāʾ-Allāh had ordered some of his enemies assassinated; this later attitude was much influenced by the anti-Bahai calumnies of *Hašt-behešt*.

In 1893 Browne published an English translation of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Hamadānī's *Tārīḵ-ejadīd,* a late pro-Bahai account of the Babi period. Again his notes to this work betray an implicit belief that even late Azalī accounts of Babi history are somehow more authentic than Bahai accounts, whereas in fact both represent evolution away from the original ideas of pristine Babism. But Browne's interest in this subject was fading, and he turned later in the 1890s to his literary history of Iran, to which he devoted the rest of his life. His enthusiasm for the study of Babism waned for several reasons. An Oxford Magazine review (25 May 1892, p. 394) attacking his work on this topic as a waste of time stung him deeply. In addition, the constant polemics between Azalīs and Bahais pained him, as did those between partisans of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ and those of his brothers after Bahāʾ-Allāh's death.

When Browne became caught up in the Constitutional Revolution in 1905-11, he showed some peripheral interest in whether or not the small minority of Azalī's and Bahais were participants. He concluded, however, that the Bahais, with their emphasis on world unity, were too cosmopolitan to be good nationalists, and he thought Iran needed nationalists at that point (Browne, 1910, pp. 424-29). In 1910 he published, at the urging and with the cooperation of the Shiʿite scholar Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Qazvīnī, the manuscript of *Ketāb-e noqṭat al-kāf*, which they attributed to Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī, an early Babi who had perished in 1852. Qazvīnī wrote the Persian introduction, and Browne wrote an English preface, in which he attacked the Bahais for attempting to rewrite history (in *Tārīḵ-ejadīd*) in order to lessen the importance of the Bab in favor of Bahāʾ-Allah and accused them of suppressing *Noqṭat al-kāf*. Although it is true that this manuscript probably circulated infrequently among Bahais, the many copies of it in Bahai collections in Iran and in Haifa demonstrate that they hardly suppressed it. Furthermore, some material and attitudes expressed in *Noqṭat al-kāf* certainly postdate 1852. The work should probably be recognized, therefore, not as the "original" history, which the *Tārīḵ-ejadīd* was meant to supplant, but as an alternative tradition about early Babism, containing primary material but redacted from an Azalī point of view before the final break between Azal and Bahāʾ-Allāh. Mīrzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegānī and other Bahai scholars replied to Browne that they had seen Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī's early chronicle of Babism and that *Noqṭat al-kāf* was not it. A number of Azalīs and Bahais wrote or published important memoirs or chronicles in response to this publication of *Noqṭat al-kāf*; Browne deposited those sent to him in his collection but wrote nothing about them (Balyuzi, pp. 70, 72-73; Browne Coll., Cambridge University, F. 57[9] "Resāla-ye Sayyed Mehdī Dahajī"; Mīrzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegānī and

Mehdī Golpāyegānī, *Kašf al-ḡeṭā',* Tashkent, 1919).

Browne's last substantial work on Babism was the publication of a miscellany of essentially unedited materials, some of them translations, entitled *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (1918). He also included a few specimens of Babi and Bahai poetry in the fourth volume of his *Literary History of Persia* (1924) and remarked favorably on the crisp style of Bahā'-Allāh's *Ketāb-e īqān*. His obituary of 'Abd-al-Bahā', written in 1921, was, in contrast to the rather tense communications of a decade earlier, warm and appreciative and showed admiration for his promotion of racial unity in the segregated United States.

iii. Browne and the Persian Constitutional Movement

E. G. Browne was incomparably more sympathetic and devoted to the Persian Constitutional movement than was any other European. Through his numerous publications, his lectures, and the letters he published in daily newspapers, he took an active part in organizing and influencing British opinion. The Persia Committee, founded in October, 1908, by Browne and H. F. B. Lynch and composed of prominent members of both houses of Parliament, as well as writers and journalists, functioned as an active and influential pressure group both inside and outside England.

Browne's deep interest in politics had begun in the early years of his life. His admiration for the Turks in their losing struggle against Russia in the war of 1877-78 first attracted his attention to the East. It was this political commitment to weaker nations struggling against political and military penetration by the European powers that led him to begin learning Turkish, followed by Arabic and Persian, and thus laid the foundations for his brilliant academic career (see i above). Nevertheless, Persia soon supplanted Turkey as the focus of his interest and came to dominate not only his scholarly but also his political activities. He admired the "stability of national type, and power of national recovery" of Persia throughout its long history and was fascinated by such ideals as the "interdependence of all mankind" and the "obligation of tolerance towards those of other religions" that he discovered in the classical Persian epics (Browne, 1917-18, pp. 312, 313).

His own profound and humane yearning for a "universal brotherhood of mankind" (Nicholson, p. viii) corresponded to the basic principles of the Babi and Bahai religions (see ii above). It was this same deep-rooted humanitarianism, rather than any reasoned theory of nationalism, that led Browne to identify himself with popular movements striving for liberty. Independent in forming his views and fearless in expressing them, he generally found himself in opposition to the official policy of his government (see i above). His belief in a plurality of nations, each preserving its distinctive character, all coexisting freely and

aiding one another, was decisive in his special dedication to the Persian cause. His manifold writings on the Constitutional movement, as well as his publication of its authentic documents, were aimed at arousing sympathy for the Persian reformers (Browne, 1909, p. 5). He asserted the Persians' right of self-determination (1917-18, p. 320) and consistently deplored the means employed by England and Russia to crush the movement, especially revealing the atrocities committed by the Russians in Persia (1912a, pp. 6, 15; 1912b). A vehement opponent of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which had established Russian and British zones of influence in Persia, Browne demanded complete abolition of these zones (1917-18, p. 329), comparing partition of Persia with that of Poland (1912a, p. 17). He perceived the Constitutional movement as essentially a nationalist, rather than a democratic (1917-18, p. 323), cause, and the Persians thus fighting for their very existence as a nation (1910, p. xix).

Browne was able to obtain valuable information for his publications from the best sources available. He was not only acquainted with Jamāl-al-Dīn Afḡānī and Mīrzā Malkom Khan but also knew many of the national leaders who had been exiled to France and England after the bombardment of Parliament by Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah in 1908, among whom Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda, ʿAlī-Akbar Dehḵodā, and Moḥammad-ʿAlī Tarbīat were the most prominent. Browne was also kept well informed by correspondents in St. Petersburg and some of his former students who had entered the British consular service.

The events in Persia were of such importance to Browne that he even discontinued work on his monumental *Literary History of Persia*, the second volume of which had just been published (1906), in order to dedicate himself fully to organizing support and assistance. Indignant with the manner in which the British foreign minister, Edward Grey, was conducting affairs in Iran, the Persia Committee, with Browne as its vice-chairman, published resolutions, staged large public meetings, and pressed for Russian withdrawal from Persia. By 1911 the executive committee consisted of forty-six members, among them thirty-three Radical members of Parliament, who subjected the House of Commons to sustained debates on Persian affairs. During 1911-12 Persia was the central issue in a general "Grey must go" campaign. To all such activities pamphlets published by Browne were fundamental.

In addition to his political work, Browne did not neglect the literary aspects of the Constitutional movement, which were attractively presented in *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*. This account of the flourishing of a free press, as well as the large quantity of excellent patriotic and political verse included, was aimed at counterbalancing the "reactionary and obscurantist policy" of *The Times*, which had criticized the "mischievous

and dangerous" character of the free press in Iran (Browne, 1914, p. xii), and at refuting those who sought for political reasons to represent the Persians as decadent and incapable of governing themselves (Browne, 1910, p. xii; idem, 1914, p. xv; idem, 1909, p. 6). In particular, he emphasized the work of the secret and semisecret societies (*anjomans*) established during the revolutionary period, which provided free education in night schools, arranged for medical treatment, and organized lectures on the duties of citizenship (1909, pp. 13, 21; 1910, pp. 244-46).

Browne was held in the highest esteem by Persians. Although he had at first been disliked in Iran because of his sympathies for the persecuted Babis, he soon evoked gratitude for having taken Persia and its literature as his own and for supporting the Persian people as few others had done. To all Persians living in exile he was of infinite help and utmost generosity. When Tabrīz was occupied by the Russians in 1911, the Constitutionalists sent telegrams asking for his assistance. As for his services to Persian literature, a contemporary Persian newspaper article compared them to the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd's patronage of Ferdowsī (quoted by E. D. Ross in his introduction to the 1926 edition of Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. xix-xx). Browne was awarded the Persian order of the Lion and the Sun, and on his sixtieth birthday he received Persian representatives who presented him with a moving illuminated address from his admirers in Iran (Arberry, p. 189). Persians today still remember Browne as one of the great men devoted to their country and its people.

Comments

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On March 10, 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

> *To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley*
>
> *March 10, 1958*

Revered Bahá'í Brother:

The Hands in the Holy Land are sending a detailed answer to the questions raised in the letter of February 24, 1958 addressed to us by the American Hands and the National Spiritual Assembly.

We believe that the points covered in our letter also meet the request made in your separate communication of February 25 to your fellow Hands in Haifa.

Here, as you know, we receive letters from all parts of the world which reflect the approach of the believers of diverse backgrounds to the ***problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing.*** *As a result, the Custodians have been made very conscious of the necessity to strive for unity in the approach to fundamental matters affecting the structure and future development of the Cause. The Custodians from East and West are aware of the wisdom of avoiding statements or points of view on basic issues which cannot be accepted equally by East and West, and indeed by all of the Bahá'í world, especially in this period, so soon after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, when* ***we are still unable to grasp the full implications of the present situation.***

It would have been a great help if you yourself could have served here in these early and critical months, and given us the benefit of your experience and clarity of thought on the many pressing issues with which we have had to cope.

You will now, we feel sure, understand our delicate position and the reasons why we felt it necessary to urge that the statement "A New Bahá'í Era" be withdrawn from circulation. *Your fellow-Hands serving here are confident you will place this whole question and its world-wide implications before the members of your National Assembly in such a way that they will fully understand the reasons underlying the actions taken here.*

No doubt when the entire body of the Hands gather at our next meeting later this year we will have many things to discuss, and each one win have a greater contribution to make in view of this tragic year's experiences.

We all send you our devoted love and assure you that you are often remembered in our prayers.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

> *HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND*

Horace Holley, as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and the New York Spiritual Assembly, had attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," which Ahmad Sohrab had founded in 1929 with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. The conflict resulted in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

Ahmad Sohrab had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter from 1912 to 1919, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when HoraceHolley, member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and the New York Spiritual Assembly attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," ultimately resulting in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

On March 31, 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

On February 4, 1958, Horace Holley, Secretary of the NSA of the U.S., responded to a cable from the Custodians sent one day previous stating "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

> *To the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land*
>
> *February 4, 1958*
>
> *Dear Friends:*
>
> *In accordance with your urgent request, steps are being taken to delete from our statement "A New Bahá'í Era" the reference to the door being closed to any hope for a future second Guardian, and the passage attributing to your body the authority to expel Covenant-breakers from the Faith.*

Since your cablegram arrived in between meetings of the National Assembly, this letter is only an acknowledgement of your cable and any further communications will be based on consultation of the Hands and National Assembly members.

Since you saw only excerpts from our statement, a copy of the complete statement is enclosed.

Sincerely

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

By: Horace Holley, Secretary

On February 3, 1958, the Custodians cabled the American Hands of the Cause of God "seriously disturbed (by the) statement New Baha'i Era issued (by the) American Hands...proclamation consider this (a) grave danger (to the) unity (of the) Faith.."

AMERICAN HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CARE BAHA'I WILMETTE

FEBRUARY 3,1958

CUSTODIANS SERIOUSLY DISTURBED STATEMENT A NEW BAHA'I ERA ISSUED AMERICAN HANDS NSA INTERPRETING ADDING Bahji, PROCLAMATION CONSIDER THIS GRAVE DANGER UNITY FAITH URGE DELETE ALL REFERENCE DOOR APPOINTMENT SECOND GUARDIAN CLOSED RIGHT NINE EXPEL COVENANT BREAKERS STOP STATEMENTS THIS NATURE CAN BE MADE ONLY ENTIRE BODY HANDS AS CHIEF STEWARDS AND NOT BY ANY NSA OR GROUP HANDS STOP THIS STATEMENT NOT YET RECEIVED BY CUSTODIANS BUT EXCERPTS FORWARDED HERE WITH PROTESTS STOP SUGGEST FOCUS ATTENTION RELEASE FIRST INTERCONTINENTAL CONFERENCE FORESHADOWING INSPIRING SUCCESS FOUR REMAINING CONFERENCES GREAT RALLYING POINTS CREATED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AID BELIEVERS ADJUST TO SITUATION REMAIN FIRM COVENANT CONCENTRATE TASKS FIVE REMAINING YEARS CRUSADE STOP REQUEST ALL CORRESPONDENCE FOR HANDS HOLY LAND ADDRESSED THEM DIRECTLY NOT TO INDIVIDUAL.

[CABLE]

Comments

February 25. On this date in 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu’l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá’í governing body, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department."

Original file: 0063.html (position #24)

February 25. On this date in 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu’l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá’í governing body, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu’l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of

God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12.

On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandaráni of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all

that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

> *Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."*
>
> *(30 November 1930)*

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

> *270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.*
>
> *"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because* ***the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice*** *and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to*

> *each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)*

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.

Corinne True, age 91 (right), with two of her daughters at the dedication of the completed House of Worship, Wilmette, IL, May 1, 1953.
(National Bahá'í Archives, United States)

Comments

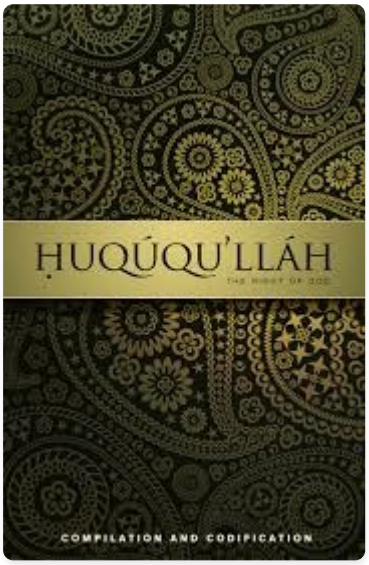
February 26. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote about Huqúqu’lláh that "The devoted believer who is privileged to pay "the right of God", far from seeking excuses for evading this spiritual obligation, will do his utmost to meet it."

Original file: 0062.html (position #23)

February 26. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote about Huqúqu’lláh that "The devoted believer who is privileged to pay "the right of God", far from seeking excuses for evading this spiritual obligation, will do his utmost to meet it."

> *57. "The devoted believer who is privileged to pay "the right of God", far..."*
>
> *The devoted believer who is privileged to pay "the right of God", far from seeking excuses for evading this spiritual obligation, will do his utmost to meet it. On the other hand, inasmuch as obedience to this Law is a matter of conscience, and*

> *payment of Huqúqu'lláh is a voluntary act, it would not be seemly to go beyond informing the ... friends of their spiritual obligation, and leaving to them to decide what they wish to do about it.*
>
> *The same principle applies to those friends who spend lavishly on their families, who purchase or build residences and furnish them far in excess of their needs, and rationalize these expenditures in their desire to avoid payment of Huqúqu'lláh.*
>
> *(26 February 1973, written by the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, translated from the Persian)*



Comments

February 26. On this date in 1953, Marguerite Sears arrived in Haifa for her Bahá'í Pilgrimage, during which she recorded Shoghi Effendi as making a number of historical, political, and theological observations as well as his making predictions for the the immediate future.

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Comments

February 26. On this date in 2011, James Nelson, a judge who served in the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1977 to 1999, died.

Original file: 0060.html (position #21)

February 26. On this date in 2011, James Nelson, a judge who served in the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1977 to 1999, died.

James Nelson was born in Los Angeles on May 19, 1927. He joined the Navy in 1945 before graduating High School, attending the graduation in his Navy uniform. He attended Stanford University for officer training but after meeting Dorothy at a YMCA camp he transferred to UCLA in 1946 so he could attend the same school as her. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1950 and married Dorothy, then served in the Navy Reserve.

In 1953 James completed a law degree at Loyola University. He became a Bahá'í in 1954 and the same year he began work as deputy district attorney of Los Angeles County. He served in the position until 1957 when he entered private practice. In 1965 he began working as a Juvenile Court Referee. Also in 1965 he chaired a Bahá'í meeting for the public in Temple City, California, at which the Bahá'í view on human rights was discussed, and he and Dorothy showed slides of the World Center at Big Bear Lake Summer School. In 1967 he began working as Judge Pro Tempore for the Los Angeles Superior Court. Ronald Reagan appointed him as a Judge on the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1968.

In 1972 James chaired a public meeting held by the Bahá'ís of Los Angeles County to commemorate Human Rights Day at which awards were given to individuals in the County who had been of service to mankind. In 1974 James and Dorothy spoke at the

International Bahá'í Youth Conference in Hawaii on A New Era in Justice. In 1975 James opened a Bahá'í Family Life Conference held in San Francisco. In 1975 the Nelsons represented the Faith at a World Peace Through Law Conference. In 1977 James was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly.

By 1980 James was Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, and in 1980 he served as Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Municipal Court. In 1982 he participated in the Seventh Bahá'í Studies Conference with Dorothy, delivering a joint talk on the Bahá'í perspective on law, language, and ethics. In 1985 the Nelsons were apart of a Bahá'í delegation to an International Conference on Religious Liberty co-sponsored by the U.S. State Department. In December 1985 James acted as spokesperson at a ceremony at which President Ronald Reagan was presented with The Promise of World Peace, the Universal House of Justice's peace statement.

In 1989 Judge Nelson retired from the Los Angeles Municipal Court, although he occasionally worked as a Superior Court judge up until 1993. By 1990 James was serving as Vice-Chair of the National Assembly. He served on the body until 1999.

James died in the presence of family in 2011 following a family party. He had suffered a stroke a few years earlier.

James' wife Dorothy also had a successful legal career, serving on the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and as Dean of the School of Law at the University of Southern California, and was also a long-serving member of the National Assembly, serving on the body from 1969 to 2009.

They had a daughter, Lorna, and son, Frank.

Comments

February 26. On this date, the Bahá'í calendar marks the start of the intercalary days known as Ayyám-i-Há.

Original file: 0059.html (position #20)

February 26. On this date, the Bahá'í calendar marks the start of the intercalary days known as Ayyám-i-Há.

A Muslim acquaintance pointed out, that Bahá'ís accept the Qur'an as the inerrant word of God (unlike the Bible), yet the Bahá'í calendar contradicts this verse in the Qur'an, 9:36...

> *The number of months with Allah has been twelve months by Allah's ordinance since the day He created the heavens and the earth. Of these four are known as forbidden [to fight in]; That is the straight usage, so do not wrong yourselves therein, and fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively. But know that Allah is with those who are righteous.*

The pre-Islamic calendar utilized an intercalary month, a practice called Nasi', that was prohibited by Muhammad in his farewell sermon...

> *Certainly the Nasi' is an impious addition, which has led the infidels into error. One year they authorise the Nasi', another year they forbid it. They observe the divine precept with respect to the number of the sacred months, but in fact they profane that which God has declared to be inviolable, and sanctify that which God has declared to be profane. Assuredly time, in its revolution, has returned to such as it was at the creation of the heavens and the earth. In the eyes of God the number of*

> *the months is twelve. Among these twelve months four are sacred, namely, Rajab, which stands alone, and three others which are consecutive*

Comments

February 26. On this date in 1986, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States explained the stipulations for wedding ceremonies "when a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í."

Original file: 0058.html (position #19)

February 26. On this date in 1986, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States explained the stipulations for wedding ceremonies "when a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í."

> *1295. When a Bahá'í Marries a Non-Bahá'í Both Ceremonies Can Be Held in the Place of Worship of Another Religion, if Requested, and Provided that...*
>
> *"In response to your email of 6 February 1986 we have been instructed by the Universal House of Justice to send you the following clarifications:*
>
> *--- When two Bahá'ís are marrying, the wedding ceremony should not be held in the place of worship of another religion, nor should the forms of the marriage of*

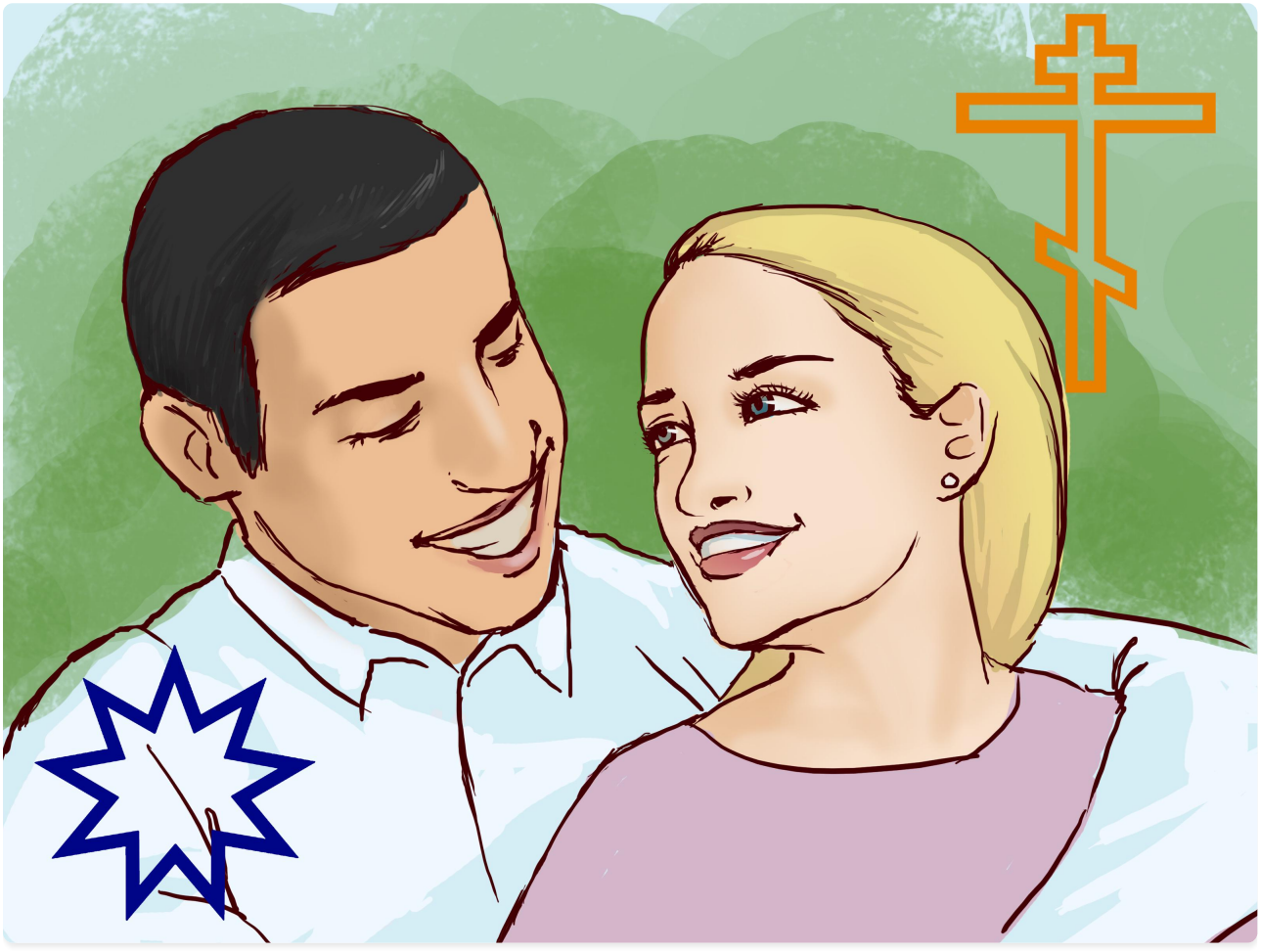
other religions be added to the simple Bahá'í ceremony.

--- When a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í, and the religious wedding ceremony of the non-Bahá'í partner is to be held in addition to the Bahá'í ceremony, both ceremonies may, if requested, be held in the place of worship of the other religion provided that:

--- Equal respect is accorded to both ceremonies. In other words, the Bahá'í ceremony, which is basically so simple, should not be regarded as a mere formal adjunct to the ceremony of the other religion.

--- The two ceremonies are clearly distinct. In other words, they should not be commingled into one combined ceremony."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, February 26, 1986)



Comments

February 26. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Australian NSA "What is important now, is for the Temple to be built. Your Assembly should study what the Master said about the influence of the Temple in America. Just exactly the same influence will be manifest in Australia."

Original file: 0057.html (position #18)

February 26. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Australian NSA "What is important now, is for the Temple to be built. Your Assembly should study what the Master said about the influence of the Temple in America. Just exactly the same influence will be manifest in Australia."

> *26 February 1957*

Mr. James Heggie: [National Spiritual Assembly]

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

The Beloved Guardian has directed me to write your Assembly with regard to the Temple design which has been received, and the proposed cost.

The Guardian is greatly pleased with the design as now prepared, and feels it is entirely satisfactory to proceed with it. The Dome is an improvement, and the ornamental treatment of the top of the pylons of the main floor a marked improvement.

The cost proposed in Mr. Brogan's letter of February 7th, is however, quite too high, for our present finances. The Guardian feels it must be built for a total of 120,000 Stirling Pounds. I take it this is somewhat more than 120,000 Australian Pounds.

The reduced cost may necessitate your reducing the size of the Building, but if that is done, it must be on exactly the same proportions as the design which you have sent, and which he now fully approves.

In Mr. Brogan's letter he mentions an external treatment of white aggregate cement, and the internal walls in colored cement. This may indicate he intends to apply a veneer on the outside of the reinforced concrete building, and a veneer also on the inside. This is what was done with the Temple in Wilmette, and is very expensive.

What is important now, is for the Temple to be built. Your Assembly should study what the Master said about the influence of the Temple in America. Just exactly the same influence will be manifest in Australia, when the Temple is built.

Thus you will see, it is not the size, nor the beauty of the Temple which is important; rather what is important is the Temple itself.

If you find Mr. Brogan did have in mind veneer treatment of the inside and outside; then you will also find a substantial saving, if you can construct the building, so the original reinforced concrete of the building, can be treated on the outside and given the color you wish, and on the inside by plastering on the cement. This is just a suggestion from my experience with the Temple in America, of which I was a

Trustee for some 19 years.

The Guardian asks that you study the matter and then let him know, or let me know for him, what adjustments are necessary to bring the cost down to 120,000 Sterling Pounds.

Also perhaps for the beginning, you are planning on too much money, for the Gardening, paths, etc. Mr. Brogan speaks of a drive. Just what is this? The immediate approaches of the Temple should not have a drive up to the building.

The Guardian assures you of his prayers in your behalf. He sends his loving Greetings,

Faithfully yours, Leroy Ioas

P.S. If the size can be maintained, or nearly so, by a simpler treatment inside and out, that may be a good way to approach your cost studies.

Comments

February 26. On this date in 1955,Shoghi Effendi "said the Guardian was not only infallible from the standpoint of interpretation of the Writings but he was infallible in whatever he declared himself to be infallible - that was the very nature of infallibility - that he knew when he was infallible.

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Original file: 0056.html (position #17)

February 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi "said the Guardian was not only infallible from the standpoint of interpretation of the Writings but he was infallible in whatever he declared himself to be infallible - that was the very nature of infallibility - that he knew when he was infallible. He knew when he was receiving Divine Guidance. Even the designs of the gardens and their development he did not know ahead of time, but each step was revealed to him as he went along. And many other things were the same way - whenever guidance was necessary it was there because he is under the unerring guidance of the

Blessed Perfection and "unto him all must turn". Since hearing him speak on this subject one reads the Will and Testament with new eyes and new understanding."

> *".....One evening he (the Guardian) came to dinner with the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and a newspaper, the London times, Dec. 16th issue. After dinner he began to speak about the article in the London Times and later gave it to us to copy .....article entitled: "Dangers of Atomic Explosions, Assessing the Risk"....."Mr. Wyatt asked the Prime Minister whether he could state with greater exactness the number of atomic and nuclear explosions that he was advised would make lethal the atmosphere over substantial areas of the world; and whether he had now studied the evidence that he (Mr. Wyatt) had submitted to him?"*
>
> *The article stated Mr. Churchill had no further comment but the Guardian was quite excited about it. He recalled the prophecy in the Tablets about there being a strange and wonderful instrument in the world that had the power to infect the atmosphere of the whole earth. This is not a direct quote but he commented that neither "wonderful" nor "instrument" were correct translations.....the word that should be used in the place of "wonderful" was "astonsihing" and perhaps "material" could be used in place of "instrument"..... Anyway he said this prophecy referred to the atom or hydrogen bobmb. There were three stage in the development of the bobmb. The first stage was the explosion at Hiroshima or Nagasaki - just the immediate vicinity. The second was the development they were speaking about in the London Times - where a "substantial" area of the earth's atmosphere could be infected or contaminated. the third was the one prophesied by Bahá'u'lláh where the atmosphere could be contaminated or infected. He said now is the time to call attention to this prophecy of Bahá'u'lláh's in our teaching work and to quote the article in the London Times.....Perhaps someone at table that night has already sent this word to you, as he wished the Americans to use this in their teaching.*
>
> *Another thing he said of great importance was his emphatic explanation of the infallibility of the Guardian. He said the Guardian was not only infallible from the standpoint of interpretation of the Writings but he was infallible in whatever he declared himself to be infallible - that was the very nature of infallibility - that he knew when he was infallible. He knew when he was receiving Divine Guidance. Even the designs of the gardens and their development he did not know ahead of time, but each step was revealed to him as he went along. And many other things*

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Comments

February 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi commented on atomic weapons and a "prophecy in the Tablets about there being a strange and wonderful instrument in the world that had the power to infect the atmosphere of the whole earth."

Original file: 0055.html (position #16)

February 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi commented on atomic weapons and a "prophecy in the Tablets about there being a strange and wonderful instrument in the world that had the power to infect the atmosphere of the whole earth...He said now is the time to call attention to this prophecy of Bahá'u'lláh's in our teaching work and to quote the article in the London Times...Perhaps someone at table that night has already sent this word to you, as he wished the Americans to use this in their teaching."

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speak about the article in the London Times and later gave it to us to copy .....article entitled: "Dangers of Atomic Explosions, Assessing the Risk"....."Mr. Wyatt asked the Prime Minister whether he could state with greater exactness the number of atomic and nuclear explosions that he was advised would make lethal the atmosphere over substantial areas of the world; and whether he had now studied the evidence that he (Mr. Wyatt) had submitted to him?"

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Comments

February 26. On this date, the Bahá'í calendar marks the start of the intercalary days known as Ayyám-i-Há.

Original file: 0054.html (position #15)

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A Muslim acquaintance pointed out, that Bahá'ís accept the Qur'an as the inerrant word of God (unlike the Bible), yet the Bahá'í calendar contradicts this verse in the Qur'an, 9:36...

> *The number of months with Allah has been twelve months by Allah's ordinance since the day He created the heavens and the earth. Of these four are known as forbidden [to fight in]; That is the straight usage, so do not wrong yourselves therein, and fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively. But know that Allah is with those who are righteous.*

The pre-Islamic calendar utilized an intercalary month, a practice called Nasi', that was prohibited by Muhammad in his farewell sermon...

> *Certainly the Nasi' is an impious addition, which has led the infidels into error. One year they authorise the Nasi', another year they forbid it. They observe the divine precept with respect to the number of the sacred months, but in fact they profane that which God has declared to be inviolable, and sanctify that which God has declared to be profane. Assuredly time, in its revolution, has returned to such as it was at the creation of the heavens and the earth. In the eyes of God the number of*

> *the months is twelve. Among these twelve months four are sacred, namely, Rajab, which stands alone, and three others which are consecutive*

Comments

February 27. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published in "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," wherein he stated "Not only will the present day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers ..."

Original file: 0053.html (position #14)

February 27. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a lengthy letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, later published in "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," wherein he stated "Not only will the present day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power. And as the Bahá'í Faith

permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world, will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future superstate."

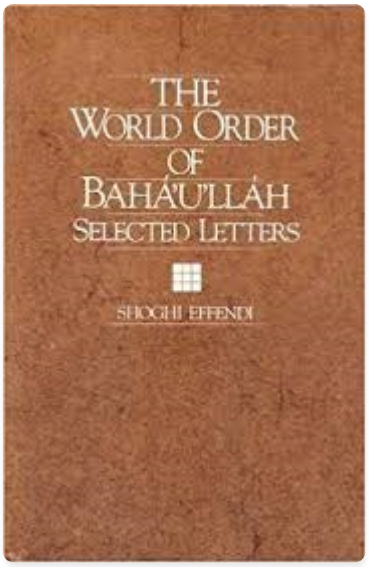
February 27. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a lengthy letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, later published in *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*.

> *It should be carefully borne in mind that the local as well as the international Houses of Justice have been expressly enjoined by the Kitáb-i-Aqdas; that the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly, as an intermediary body, and referred to in the Master's Will as the "Secondary House of Justice," has the express sanction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; and that the method to be pursued for the election of the International and National Houses of Justice has been set forth by Him in His Will, as well as in a number of His Tablets. Moreover, the institutions of the local and national Funds, that are now the necessary adjuncts to all local and national spiritual assemblies, have not only been established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets He revealed to the Bahá'ís of the Orient, but their importance and necessity have been repeatedly emphasized by Him in His utterances and writings. The concentration of authority in the hands of the elected representatives of the believers; the necessity of the submission of every adherent of the Faith to the considered judgment of Bahá'í Assemblies; His preference for unanimity in decision; the decisive character of the majority vote; and even the desirability for the exercise of close supervision over all Bahá'í publications, have been sedulously instilled by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as evidenced by His authenticated and widely-scattered Tablets. To accept His broad and humanitarian Teachings on one hand, and to reject and dismiss with neglectful indifference His more challenging and distinguishing precepts, would be an act of manifest disloyalty to that which He has cherished most in His life.*
>
> ***That the Spiritual Assemblies of today will be replaced in time by the Houses of Justice, and are to all intents and purposes identical and not separate bodies, is abundantly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself.*** *He has in fact in a Tablet addressed to the members of the first Chicago Spiritual Assembly, the first elected Bahá'í body instituted in the United States, referred to*

them as the members of the "House of Justice" for that city, and has thus with His own pen established beyond any doubt the identity of the present Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies with the Houses of Justice referred to by Bahá'u'lláh. For reasons which are not difficult to discover, it has been found advisable to bestow upon the elected representatives of Bahá'í communities throughout the world the temporary appellation of Spiritual Assemblies, a term which, as the position and aims of the Bahá'í Faith are better understood and more fully recognized, will gradually be superseded by the permanent and more appropriate designation of House of Justice. Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the ***State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.*** *And as the Bahá'í Faith permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world,* ***will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future super-state.***

It must be pointed out, however, in this connection that, contrary to what has been confidently asserted, ***the establishment of the Supreme House of Justice is in no way dependent upon the adoption of the Bahá'í Faith by the mass of the peoples of the world,*** *nor does it presuppose its acceptance by the majority of the inhabitants of any one country. In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Himself, in one of His earliest Tablets, contemplated the possibility of the formation of the Universal House of Justice in His own lifetime, and but for the unfavorable circumstances prevailing under the Turkish régime, would have, in all probability, taken the preliminary steps for its establishment. It will be evident, therefore, that given favorable circumstances, under which the Bahá'ís of Persia and of the adjoining countries under Soviet rule, may be enabled to elect their national representatives, in accordance with the guiding principles laid down in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings, the only remaining obstacle in the way of the definite formation of the International House of Justice will have been removed. For upon the National Houses of Justice of the East and the West devolves the task, in conformity with the explicit provisions of the Will, of electing directly the members of the International House of Justice. Not until they are themselves fully representative of the rank and file of the believers in their respective countries, not*

> *until they have acquired the weight and the experience that will enable them to function vigorously in the organic life of the Cause, can they approach their sacred task, and provide the spiritual basis for the constitution of so august a body in the Bahá'í world.*



Comments

February 27. On this date in 2013, The Guardian newspaper carried an article titled "Bahá'í student expelled from Iranian university 'on grounds of religion'"

February 27. On this date in 2013, *The Guardian* newspaper carried an article titled "Bahá'í student expelled from Iranian university 'on grounds of religion'"

> *Bahá'í student expelled from Iranian university 'on grounds of religion'*
>
> *'Impressively talented' Paniz Fazl-Ali reportedly had one year to go to complete her engineering degree*
>
> *An Iranian student belonging to one of the country's most persecuted religious minorities appears to have been expelled from university because of her beliefs.*
>
> *Paniz Fazl-Ali, a civil engineering student at Iran's University of Science and Technology (IUST) in Tehran, has been banned from continuing her undergraduate degree after it emerged that she is a member of the Bahá'í community, activists said.*
>
> *Daneshjoo News, a website which gathers information about students across Iran, reported on Wednesday that Fazl-Ali, who is described as "impressively talented",*

was informed last week that she has been expelled.

She is reported to have successfully finished her third year and had only one year to graduate from the typical four-year engineering programme.

Every year hundreds of thousands of students across the Islamic republic compete with each other in a keenly contested entrance exam held for public universities. Only a few thousands are accepted in top Iranian universities such as the IUST.

In university registration forms, students are required to reveal their religion, but Bahá'ís, who are a banned religious minority, usually leave it blank – as did Fazl-Ali.

"Last month the university administrators summoned me and asked me to fill the section about my religion and I wrote Bahá'í," she told Daneshjoo News. "Last week, as I went to see one of my test results, I noticed that I have been expelled."

Islam is the official religion in Iran and only Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians are tolerated as accepted religious minorities with access to higher education, although each face various restrictions. Bahá'ís, however, have been banned since 1981.

"The day after I got the news I went to the university with my father to pursue what had happened. But nobody gave us any explanation," she said.

Iran considers the religion of a child to be that of his father. Those who convert to other religions risk arrest or even execution for apostasy. In October 2009, an Iranian Christian pastor, Youcef Nadarkhani, was arrested for converting at the age of 19 to Christianity from Islam, his parent's religion, although he insisted he was never a practising Muslim. He was initially sentenced to death for apostasy but was released from jail in September.

After the 1979 Islamic revolution, the authorities stepped up the persecution of the Bahá'í community, accusing its members of having links with or spying for Israel, mainly because the Bahá'í governing body, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, is based in Haifa.

At least 219 Bahá'í in Iran were executed because of their religious allegiance after the 1979 revolution.

Iranian Bahá'ís have been deprived of their rights, such as access to education or

the right to own a business, and are often persecuted for their beliefs. Seven leaders of the Bahá'í community have been in prison for the past five years, each serving 20-year jail sentences.

Bahá'ís might be able to survive in the Iranian society as long as they keep their religion secret, but according to their beliefs they cannot lie if forced to reveal their faith. In 2001, only five Bahá'ís were in jail in Iran, but since 2004 more than 600 arrests have been made and at least 110 Bahá'ís are currently in jail, including the seven leaders, Fariba Kamalabadi, Vahid Tizfahm, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli and Saeid Rezaie.

Scores of Bahá'ís have been expelled from universities in Iran in recent years.

"International law provides that access to education is a basic human right, and Iranian universities have no excuse for denying qualified students the right to attend simply because they are Bahá'ís," said Kishan Manocha, a spokesman for the UK's Bahá'í community. "It is clear that, so long as Bahá'ís are unjustly denied access to higher education, the years of systematic persecution and quiet strangulation against the Iran's sore-tried Bahá'ís continue unabated.

"We call for this injustice to cease, and that Iran's Bahá'í community be treated with the same rights as the ordinary Iranian citizens they are."

The UN's special rapporteur on Iran, Ahmad Shaheed, has described Bahá'ís as "the most persecuted religious community" in the Islamic republic and has repeatedly expressed concerns about their access to education in the country.

"The numbers of Bahá'ís that are in prison have increased – over 100 at the present time according to the information I have," Shaheed said in a speech in New York in October 2012.

"They face a whole range of discrimination, from being unable to practice their faith [to] being denied access to basic services," he said. "And often they face charges unrelated to their faith – national security charges."

A leaked official communication from Iran's ministry of science, research and technology to 81 universities across the country in 2006 shows that they have been instructed to expel all their Bahá'í students.

"If the identity of Bahá'í individuals becomes known at the time of enrolment or

> *during the course of their studies, they must be expelled from university," stated the letter, according to the Bahá'í World News Service.*

Comments

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> *27 February (1922) [to Professor Auguste Forel]*
>
> *Honoured Sir:*
>
> *It is with regret and sorrow that I enclose at last the long-protracted translations of `Abdu'l-Bahá's answer to your letter. His sudden passing to the Great Beyond has plunged us all in profound grief and added heavily to our preoccupations and responsibilities. Happily, however, the full answer to your epistle, had been*

written, and signed by him many days before his passing and were it not for the desire to have it adequately rendered into English and French, it would have reached you far sooner than now. As I am not certain of your address at the present moment, I am enclosing a copy of the original text which bears his signature, hoping to forward the text as soon as I am assured of your true address.

I am sending, too, a copy of the English version to Mr. A. Isfáhání, a Bahá'í friend of ours who, I understand, has had the pleasure and privilege of meeting you on more than one occasion, and who I am sure will submit it to you, should this letter fail to reach its destination.

The Bahá'ís the world over will be delighted to have copies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's answer to your letter circulated amongst them, as it is unique in many respects and much appreciated in its nature and comprehensiveness. I have refrained from giving them copies until I hear of your desire to do so.

Being a personal letter I thought it incumbent upon me to inform you and request you on this point.

My very best wishes and kind regards and hoping to hear from you soon,

I am yours very sincerely

Shoghi Rabbani

(grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

On September 10, 1931, Shoghi Effendi wrote the daughter of Auguste Forel, who had died a few months previous.

10 September 1931[to Mrs. Marta Brauns-Forel]

In regard to your father's spiritual testament, which betrays on the part of the author an inadequate knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith, the Guardian feels that you should make it clear to all the inquirers that the late Dr. Forel, as many other persons who have embraced the Cause, did not have a complete understanding of the fundamentals of the Bahá'í religion. He was particularly interested in the social aspect of the Movement and owing to some psychological reasons he did not lay

much emphasis on its doctrinal side. This can be explained by the fact that our lamented doctor being advanced in age at the time of his acquaintance with the Bahá'í teachings was not able to devote all his time to a deep study of the tenets of the Faith.

Shoghi Effendi, however, in his letter addressed personally to your father explained to him that the Bahá'ís should firmly believe in the existence of God and in the immortality of the soul and in many other fundamental teachings which the Bahá'ís share with the adherents of many other religions. Our lamented doctor may have most probably considered it unwise to declare openly that he had rejected all his previous conceptions in regard to the existence of God and such similar ideas and preferred to express in an indirect way the many changes which the knowledge of the Faith had brought in his mind by declaring that he had become a Bahá'í.

At any rate there is no doubt whatever that the well-known Tablet revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for him had brought a tremendous change in his monistic theories and induced him to accept the Message openly.

However great the contradictions in Dr. Forel's testament in regard to his attitude towards the Cause we cannot fail but to recognize him as a Bahá'í who had but a partial glimpse of the Bahá'í Revelation. No one can claim that his knowledge of this Revelation is adequate, especially at this time when the Bahá'í Faith is still in the embryonic stage of its development. Dr. Forel was sincere in his convictions but like every human being his comprehension was limited and this was not in his power to change.

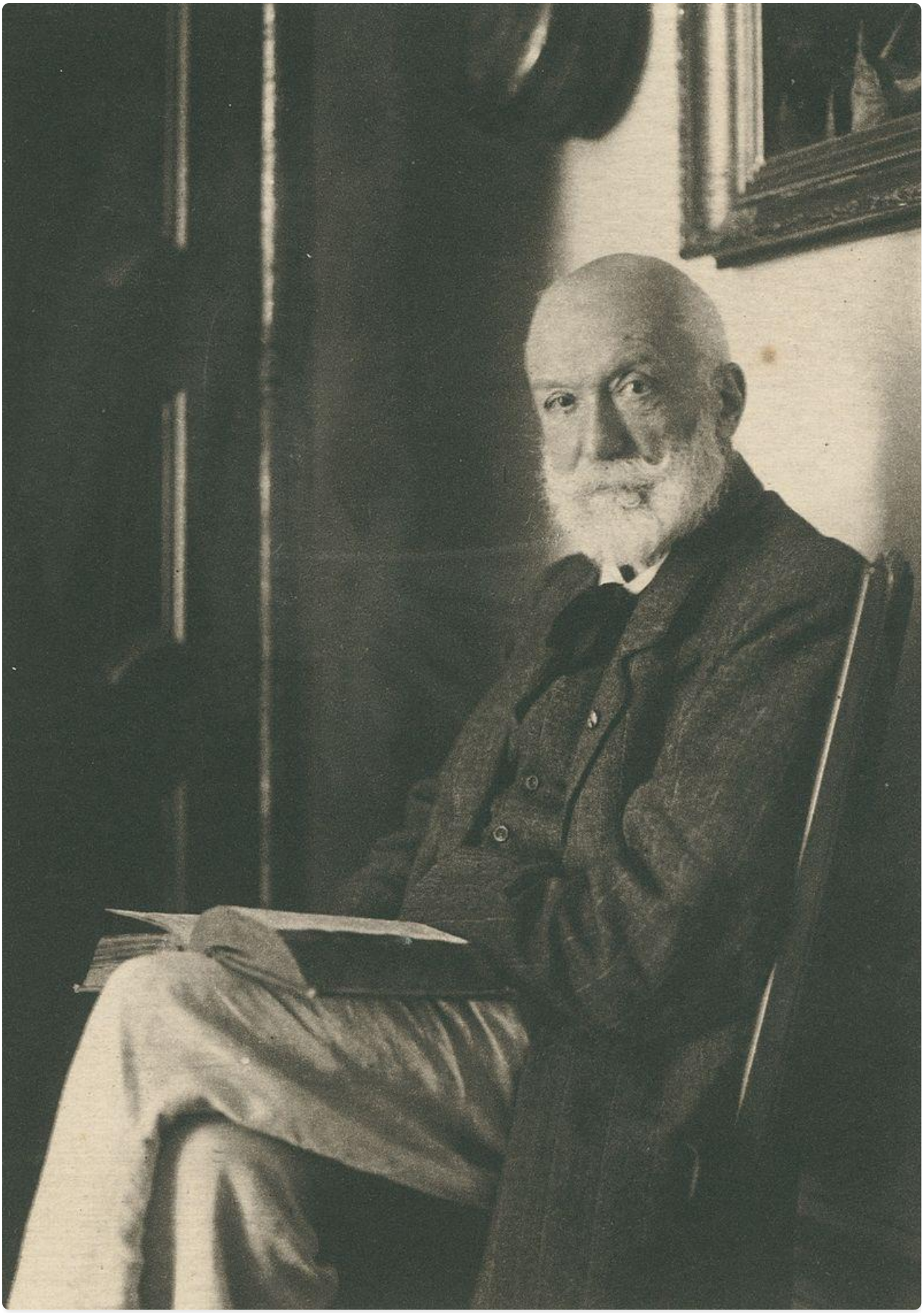
These are the ideas which came to Shoghi Effendi's mind when he read a `&resume' of Dr. Forel's testament in one of the well-known Swiss journals and he wishes you to share them with all those who are interested to know of the Doctor's attitude towards this Movement....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

The passing of your distinguished father has indeed grieved me profoundly and I wish to assure you of my heartfelt sympathy in your irreparable loss. I would deeply appreciate a written account of his eventful life and of the meritorious services he rendered humanity, either from your pen or any other friend in

> *Germany, for publication in the next issue of the Bahá'í World. I feel that his reference to the Cause in the codicil of this testament indicates the perceptible change in his mental outlook since he penned the earlier passages of his will, for he must have known from the Tablet he received as well as from the letters I wrote him and from many other Bahá'í publications the fundamental and distinguishing features of the Cause. That is why I feel that with your consent and approval, the publication of his references to the Cause in his testament could very well be published in the Bahá'í World. With my best wishes and deepest sympathy,*
>
> *Shoghi*



Comments

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> *IRAN'S BAHA'IS: SOME CALL IT GENOCIDE*
>
> *By R.w. Apple Jr.*
>
> *Feb. 27, 1983*
>
> *For centuries the city of Shiraz, in southwestern Iran, has been a center of Persian poetry and intellectual life. The very word "Persian" comes from Pars, the name of the region centering on Shiraz. It is also the birthplace of the Bab, a 19th-century prophet whose teachings led to the creation of the Baha'i faith.*
>
> *Two weeks ago in that city, the latest chapter in a long history of the Baha'i persecution unfolded before an Islamic tribunal. Of 21 members of the sect on trial for spying and alleged links with Israel, 20 were condemned to death, according to a Baha'i spokesman in London. The remaining defendant was pardoned.*
>
> *The Baha'is have been the scapegoats of Persian and then Iranian society for generations. Donald M. Barrett, the secretary-general of the Baha'i World Center in Haifa, Israel, says 20,000 Baha'is have been killed in Iran during the last 100 years. Since the advent of the Khomeini regime in 1979 at least 135 Baha'is, many of them spiritual leaders, have been executed.*

The adherents of this relatively little-known religion seem unlikely villains. They uphold the divine origin of all major religions, including Islam. They shun violence, abstain from partisan politics and advocate unexceptionable principles such as the "development of good character" and the "eradication of prejudices of race, creed, class, nationality and sex," to quote from a recent pamphlet. Claiming adherents in 173 countries, the Baha'i faith published literature in some 600 languages and dialects. It maintains vast domed houses of worship in Wilmette, Ill.; Frankfurt-am-Main, West Germany; Kampala, Uganda; Sydney, Australia and Panama City, Panama. Others are being built in India and Samoa.

In Iran, however, members of the sect have always been considered heretics by the Shi'ite Muslim majority, while their relative prosperity has attracted the hostility of those less well-off. There are between 300,000 and 400,000 Baha'is in Iran, according to officials of the faith. Mr.Barrett estimated that 10,000 have left the country since the revolution. For the last six months, he added, none have been able to leave. Applications for exit visas must now specify the applicant's religion, and Baha'is are being turned down.

Although Savak, the secret police of the late Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, is believed to have persecuted some members of the sect, and despite the Shah's refusal to reopen Baha'i schools closed by his father in 1934, the Baha'is served the old regime under their doctrine of obedience to the temporal authorities of the country of residence. Indeed, the Shah was so certain of their loyalty, he used Bahai's to maintain army communications. That led the Khomeini regime - especially the mullahs, who resent the Baha'i challenge to their authority - to accuse the sect of collaborating with a corrupt government.

"That is absolutely false," Mr. Barrett said. "Baha'is are forbidden from participating in partisan politics. Baha'is were the only group who, at great risk, refused to join the Shah's political party. We were nonpolitical and continue to be nonpolitical."

Nonetheless, officials in Teheran see the sect as a classic example of the impurity of the Shah's Iran. They further believe that Baha'is are in league with an Iranian enemy, Israel, citing as evidence receipts from contibutions made by Iranian Baha'is to shrines at Haifa and at Acco in Israel. In fact, Israel is the Baha'i holy land.

Religious differences heighten Iran's contempt for the sect. Because Baha'is do not

make distinctions between men and women, they do not segregate the sexes at religious services, as demanded by Iran's Islamic fundamentalists. Baha'i women wear no veils, having cast them aside in the last century. Baha'is are accused of immorality because their marriage rites are not recognized in Iran and no civil marriage exists. A member of the sect commented, "We can betray our faith and marry according to Moslem precepts, or we can remain true to our beliefs and find ourselves accused of adultery, prostitution and other sins."

Meanwhile, Baha'is are being denied recognition under the Islamic constitution, which in theory protects Iran's Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian minorities. This has permitted what the Baha'i office at the United Nations calls a "campaign of religious persecution so malevolent, so intense, so sustained and so far-reaching that it presages the eradication of the Baha'i community as a religious minority in Iran." It appears now that about three years ago the Khomeini Government initiated a program to break the sect's organizational back. The faith has no priests or mullahs and hence no ecclesiastic hierarchy; it is run by councils or assemblies elected by secret ballot each year. On Aug.21, 1980, all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly in Teheran were arrested. Nothing has been heard of them. Since then, Mr. Barrett said, members of local spiritual assemblies in every locality have been picked up. Exact numbers are not known, but it seems that thousands have been jailed or abducted.

Businesses have been confiscated, trade licenses revoked; retired government employees have lost pensions. Houses, crops and animals have been destroyed; shrines and cemeteries demolished; children have been denied places in schools. The house of the Bab in Shiraz - which means as much to Baha'is as the Church of the Nativity means to Christians, the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem means to Jews and the Kaaba shrine in Mecca means to Muslims - was bulldozed, Mr. Barrett said. The site is now a parking lot.

Condemnations by the European Community, the United States and the United Nations have "slowed the process of total obliteration of the Baha'i faith in Iran," according to Mr. Barrett. But other Baha'i leaders and several independent observers use the word "genocide" to describe what they fear is happening.

Iran's Baha'is: Some Call It Genocide
Ideas & Trends
Where We Stand
Of Chancellors, Flagpoles and Raises
Headliners
Advance Your Career in Management

Comments

February 28. On this date in 2009, the last among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Kiev, Ukraine.

Original file: 0049.html (position #10)

February 28. On this date in 2009, the last among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Kiev, Ukraine.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have

previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the

International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

Comments

February 28. On this date in 1912, an article in the "SFO Daily News" stated "... the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. ... Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís"

Original file: 0048.html (position #9)

February 28. On this date in 1912, "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan

or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, Bahá’í-Mohammedan.”

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*
>
> *Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: “Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, ‘Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.’ Now the same condition prevails.”*
>
> *This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of*

> *strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, "What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?" let them answer: "We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."*

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*
>
> *"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.*
>
> *"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."*

> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)*

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

> *1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like*
>
> *"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.*
>
> *"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."*

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

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1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order

"As regards your question about the Masonic Order, he considers that the honest and courageous thing for you to do is to inform your Lodge that you no longer consider yourself, for purely personal reasons, a Mason; and would like to have your name taken off their list. If they should press you for an explanation, which he imagines is unlikely, everybody being free to do as they please in this world, you can explain to them that in the present chaotic period the world is passing through, with so many streams and counterstreams of political thoughts and prejudices of all kinds, racial, religious, etc., storming the minds of men, that you wish to disentangle yourself from all association with the past and to stand alone, free in your own ideas.

"He does not think that such an explanation will prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 26, 1956)

On February 17, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

1388. Bahá'ís Requested to Withdraw from Masonic and Other Secret Societies

"As regards your question about Masonry, the Bahá'ís, the Guardian feels very strongly, must learn at the present time to think internationally and not locally. Although each believer realizes that he is a member of one great spiritual family, a member of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he does not often carry this thought through to its logical conclusion: which is that if the Bahá'ís all over the world each belong to some different kind of society or church or political party, the unity of the Faith will be destroyed, because inevitably they will become involved in doctrines and policies that are in some way against our Teachings, and often against another group of people in another part of the world, or another race, or another religious block.

> *"Therefore, all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies in order to be entirely free to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a united body. Such groups as Masonry, however high the local standard may be, are in other countries gradually being influenced by the issues sundering the nations at present.*
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> *"The Guardian wants the Bahá'ís to disentangle themselves from anything that may in any way, now or in the future, compromise their independent status as Bahá'ís and the supra-national nature of their Faith."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 17, 1956)*

Almost exactly a year earlier, on February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

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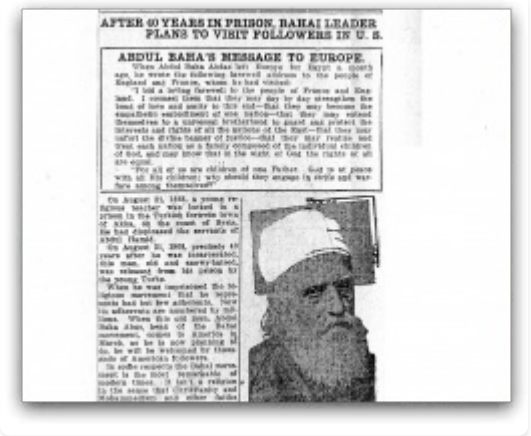
"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)


AFTER 40 YEARS IN PRISON, BAHAI LEADER PLANS TO VISIT FOLLOWERS IN U. S.

ABDUL BAHA'S MESSAGE TO EUROPE

Comments

February 28. On this date in 1942, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a "Bahá'í Sister" in the United Kingdom referred to another Bahá'í, stating that "Regarding ..., Shoghi Effendi is writing him direct, advising him to sever his membership in the Synagogue."

Original file: 0047.html (position #8)

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'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, Bahá'í-

Mohammedan."

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*
>
> *Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: "Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, 'Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.' Now the same condition prevails."*
>
> *This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, "What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?" let them answer: "We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."*

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá’ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*
>
> *"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.*
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>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)*

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like

*"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.*

"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

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"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of

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1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order

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world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

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"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

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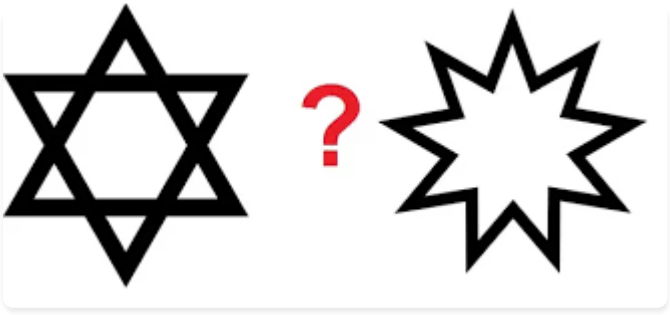


Comments

February 28. On this date in 1988, Douglas Martin wrote a preface to the 1999 re-publishing of Shoghi Effendi's "Messages to Canada" which is a compilation of letters written to Canadian Bahá’ís from 1948 to 1957. Douglas Martin served on NSA of Canada from 1960 to 1985, when he was appointed ...

Original file: 0046.html (position #7)

February 28. On this date in 1988, Douglas Martin wrote a preface to the 1999 re-publishing of Shoghi Effendi's "Messages to Canada" which is a compilation of letters written to Canadian Bahá’ís from 1948 to 1957.

Douglas Martin was born in Ontario, Canada, on February 24, 1927, where he pursued a professional career as a consultant in advertising and public relations.

Douglas Martin served on the NSA of Canada from 1960 to 1985, when he was appointed director-general of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information at the World Centre in Haifa. He served in that capacity until 1993 when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2005.

Douglas Martin died on September 28, 2020.

In 2000, Juan Cole wrote "A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice"

A Brief History of Douglas Martin, Member, Universal House of Justice

by Juan Cole, one of his victims

31 January 2000

Doug Martin told John Walbridge and several other Baha'is in the early 1980s that he viewed me as a covenant breaker. I was at the time a Baha'i in good standing, a former pioneer in Lebanon and Jordan, a travel teacher, studying at UCLA with the son of a Hand of the Cause. It is absolutely outrageous that he was making such charges then, but this is the way he has behaved all along. I presume that he confuses thinking creatively or academically with breaking the Baha'i covenant, an attitude that I think qualifies him as a fundamentalist, or perhaps even a cultist.

This was at a time when he was powerful in the Association for Baha'i Studies and had read some of the materials I submitted to it, as well as corresponding with me about a particular issue. He gave a talk in Canada about the faith in which he advocated Israeli control of Jerusalem. Unbeknownst to him, this talk was taped by the conference organizers, who assumed it was his conference paper submission, and they typed it up and printed it in a book published in India. I discovered the book and wrote him a protest that he was involving the faith in politics in a big way. (The status of Jerusalem is still undetermined in international law). He explained that he had not intended for his remarks to be published. I now realize that he must have been petrified that I might use this incident to discredit him, since of course behind the scenes that is the way he himself has behaved throughout his entire Baha'i career. In fact, I let it go. He nursed a grudge against me thereafter. This Jerusalem talk was typical of the kind of fundamentalist "Zionism" he espouses, along with a lot of other wacky ideas like the world changing dramatically in the year 2000. (How will he backpedal about *that*?) There isn't much difference between his discourse and that of someone like Jerry Falwell. Note that like the rightwing "Christian Zionists," Martin actually does not mean the Jewish people particularly well, since he just wants to convert

them to his religion. His "Zionism" is a use of them for his own, fundamentalist and apocalyptic purposes.

In fact, putting the Canadian clique of Martin, Hatcher and Danesh in charge of the Association for Baha'i Studies in the late 70s and through the 80s was clearly a strategic move on the part of some conservative House members of the time. That clique had no academic credentials in the humanities or social sciences and they so mismanaged the organization that they alienated from it most of the real academics and intellectuals. They provoked the resignation of the California regional committee of the ABS in the mid-80s, and when John Walbridge protested their policies Martin had him fired from the ABS board. When [Gerald] travelled around Europe and made up a directory of Baha'i scholars in Europe, he showed it to Martin, who harshly criticized him for taking the initiative and so hurt his feelings that he left the faith for ten years.

Martin also wrote fierce editorials in the Canadian Baha'i newsletter in the mid-1980s viciously attacking Kalimat Press's Circle series of intellectual explorations of peace, gender equality, etc., for daring suggest that these were "Baha'i" views. As big Honcho in ABS he often rejected paper submissions for being insufficiently fundamentalist, and this happened to a number of bona fide Baha'i academics. He saw ABS as a way of *controlling* rather than nurturing "Baha'i Scholarship." In the late 1980s he had Abbas Amanat out to speak at an ABS convention in Canada. He was very pleasant to Abbas's face. But when Abbas left he conducted a kvetching session with the rightwing Baha'i fundamentalists in the audience who had been enraged by Abbas's academic talk. There is a Hindi-Urdu proverb that someone has a dagger hidden under their arm but keeps chanting the name of Ram in public. (Baghal men~ churi, mun~ men~ Ram Ram.) In 1990 or '91 Martin was brought to Haifa by his buddies on the UHJ to be a publicist for it, and this was read by the NSA members as a signal that the UHJ viewed him as electable to that body. He was also in a prominent position to subtly lobby NSAs. We heard from a Polish Baha'i that their NSA beseeched him for a reply to a Christian critique of the faith in the early '90s and he obliged. There was 9 votes, right there. The NSA members dutifully put him on in 1993, along with Farzam Arbab, who had been brought to the ITC. A shift occurred after 1983 in UHJ elections whereby only appointees of the House were thereafter elected, rather than the members coming from NSAs as had earlier been the practice. I cannot explain this shift except to say that as a social scientist it strikes me as likely to have been engineered behind the scenes rather than being an accident. Since most of the people appointed by the UHJ have been hardliners, this change has allowed arch-conservatives to capture the UHJ.

In 1994-96 when talisman@indiana.edu started up, Martin, Arbab and Semple were

constituted as a subcommittee of the UHJ charged with monitoring talisman and the Western Baha'i academics. In fact, of course, there was nothing in the slightest wrong with having a Baha'i discussion list or posting email messages on it. They viewed this as a *crime* in the making! They early on wanted to crack down on us, but were cautious about the possible backlash. By spring of 1996 they had decided to have us accused behind the scenes of breaking the covenant (which was, as they knew very well, ridiculous). Since this had been Martin's line since the early 1980s, it is likely to have been his idea. It was, of course, a disaster for the intellectual development of the faith, though since we really have the faith's best interests at heart it hasn't been as much a disaster as it could have been.

The 1997 expulsion of Michael McKenny from the Canadian Baha'i community (apparently for the crime of holding enlightened views and speaking them on email) is almost certainly also the work of Martin, who has the Canada portfolio on the UHJ.

So, behind the scenes, this man has played a very sinister role in making the administration of the faith inhospitable to intellectual and spiritual exploration of the sort Baha'u'llah clearly desired for us. He has taken what should have been an open-minded faith and made it a crucible for inquisition. Martin doesn't know a word of Arabic or Persian, and has a limited intellectual range. He has by his charisma managed to rise to a number of high offices and has employed double dealing, smear campaigns, behind the scenes threats, and blackballing to shape Baha'i culture in his own misshapen image.

Now, of course, I regret, as a Baha'i, having to speak this way about a fellow Baha'i, but his behavior over 20 years has been so egregious as to leave me, in the end, no choice. However, I will say that he is not beyond redemption, as none of us are. It is not too late for him to reconsider, to repent, to begin *actually* playing the sort of positive role in Baha'i thinking that he has *pretended* in public to play for so long. His actions have profoundly damaged the Cause of Baha'u'llah. It can survive him, but does he really want that to be his epitaph? And my hand of friendship is waiting to be outstretched toward him, should I see that he has genuinely re-thought his past actions and wishes to make amends. It is his choice.

cheers Juan

[P.S. I attach some emails about Martin's activities that I have received through the years. A typical Baha'i apparatchik, stabbing people in the back and gathering power in his hands through subterfuge. ---------- ---------- To: "Juan Cole" jrcole@umich.edu

Subject: RE: infallibility

Date: Fri, 29 May 1998 21:20:45

Dear Juan,

Yes, the thought that Doug Martin [is infallible] would lead you to uncontrollable fits of laughter is understandable.

What astounds me is the Zen-like humor of the Godhead. When the gentleman in question went from being the secretary of the Canadian NSA to the International Teaching committee, I thought that it was a question of "up and out". Boy, was I wrong!

At one point I was informed that the only way to get anything on the agenda of the Canadian NSA was to go though Doug, I realized how screwed up things were. He effectively ran the Canadian Bahai community. His biases formed the policy of the Canadian NSA, whether the other members of the NSA were aware of it or not. Assemblies learned to approach him via assemblies that were for some odd reason, in favor. It was a subtle dynamic. However if an assembly really needed something done they had to approach an individual on certain other assemblies in order for these ideas to eventually be seen by Doug.

Take care,

At 04:14 PM 3/16/98 +0500, John Walbridge wrote:

. . . Back in about 1982, [Gerald] was a young scholarship groupie . . . I remember doing Sufi dancing with among others him and Steve Scholl on the lawn of Green Acre. Anyway, he wanted to be involved with ABS scholarly activities. He went to Europe, traveled around, met all the aspiring scholars there, and wrote a very detailed report on Baha'i scholarly activity in Europe, telling what everybody was up to. I thought it was rather useful myself; it was the days before the European and American Baha'i academics had had very much contact. I still have a copy of it somewhere.

He presented this thing to the ABS board, hoping for some thanks and I think seeing himself as a sort of contact person between the Europeans and Americans. Doug hit the roof, complaining loudly that no one had asked him to do that and making it clear that he should not speak until spoken too. There was some administrative principle at stake, although what it might have been, God only knows. I think a letter to that effect was probably sent to [Gerald]. It seemed churlish to me, since the report struck me as useful.

Even if it wasn't, a politely hypocritical letter wouldn't have cost us anything. [Gerald] seems to have slunk away and soon after left the Faith for a good many years. He seems to have returned chastened . . .

Date: Sun, 22 Mar 1998 21:42:08 -0700

Subject: Re: Files

Yes, your reporter's [account] seems to be what I recall. I did not know all the details about who at ABS flipped out over his report. Danesh, Hatcher and Martin often seemed to be one-in-the-spirit and they loved to knock down any of us young upstarts who tried to do anything at all. My first Bahai interrogation came at their hands, when the NSA/ABS sent Hatcher to "chat" with me when I was at McGill.

But, as I mentioned, I think [Gerald's] exodus was more complicated than just being upset with ABS. After all, he still had supporters among his peers who would have given him a clearing space to vent and be welcomed. . . . I suspect, but have no inside knowledge, that he felt that his academic prowess was suspect as well and so he left Baha'i studies circles for several years to focus on his music career. This led him to his marriage to a non-Baha'i and it seems that he only returned to Bahai after this marriage ended.

Date: Thu, 20 Jun 1996 22:33:40 -0500 (EST)

From: jwalbrid jwalbrid@indiana.edu

Subject: Re: Status Quo Ante Hardly

I think I wrote up the events for my own benefit at the time, but I don't know where they are. What happened is this, to the best of my memory.

I was appointed to the Board of ABS in 1980 as the first US representative. There were a number of problems with people in California, [T] notable among them. At any rate, the Board eventually decided to seize the nettle and set up a California committee consisting of {BP], [T], and the [B's]. The California committee then wanted to do a conference on Baha'i history, a touchy topic in the aftermath of the West LA Deepening Class and the defection of MacEoin.

This caused a great deal of debate on the Board. What is worse, [BP] wanted to have an anti-nuclear peace conference--in effect, thinking up the Peace Message two years before

the House of Justice did. The ABS Board was terrified of losing control in California--at least the Canadians were; I didn't much care. I made two trips to California, the second one at least with Doug Martin, to try to iron things out.

After the second trip, we had a very tense Board meeting at which we ironed out a complicated compromise on how to handle the situation. At that time, I was living in Upper Michigan and had to take this grueling six-leg plane trips to get to and from the meetings in Ottawa, usually involving lost luggage, late or missed flights, or both. The meetings usually petered out on Sunday morning, so for once I decided I would leave at lunch. After lunch, Doug and Bill Hatcher decided to reopen the issue, and the decision was changed after I left in ways that everybody knew I would not have agreed with. I heard about it a couple of days later when I called the ABS office about something else. I was livid and demanded that the issue--whatever exactly it was--be reopened since such a decision should not have been made without consulting me. I heard nothing more, and called [the secretary] back a week or two later. "Oh," she said, "Doug talked to Firuz, and your NSA agrees with him." In fact, this was not true, but it was too late to do anything about it. The California regional committee was dissolved.

There was an aftermath too. I called [the secretary] a month or two later about some routine item of business and asked her when the next Board meeting was scheduled for. "Don't you know?" she asked. "Your NSA has replaced you." I called Firuz, who was the secretary that year, and he said, "I'm very sorry. I had been meaning to call and tell you."

When Hossain Danesh made his annual report to the ABS meeting that year, there was no mention of the California events or of me, for that matter . . .

john

Date: Sat, 22 Jun 1996

Subject: Re: ABS California Committee Redux

As I recall, the ABS Ex. Bd. was not satisfied with disbanding the committee. After the History Conference went forward under the aegis of the LA Assembly, they went to the US NSA and asked them to suppress the conference. The NSA, primarily I suspect out of a sense of territoriality (and also because there was no love lost between Doug Martin and Firuz Kazemzadeh), refused, saying that they saw no reason to intervene in the affairs of an LSA. Still, Firuz Kazemadeh declined an invitation to attend himself, while Danesh and Martin actively and publicly campagined against the conference.

I believe that the "Central Committee," as I liked to call it, planned all of the regional conference for the first few years until the local committees had proven themselves. But they still might intervene to change the program. When I was invited to speak at a conference in the Northwest region in the 1980's, someone on the committee called me one day before the conference to say that my paper had been cancelled because of a reference to "Babi uprisings" in the introduction--I was informed in no uncertain terms that there were no Babi uprisings. Someone on the committee, it turned out, had complained to friends in Ottowa after the invitation (with a promise of airfare and accomodations) had been issued. Never mind that the term was not even in the shortened version of the paper that I planned to deliver there--somehow, because I would harbor such an idea, my ideas were tainted and therefore I shouldn't be allowed (let alone invited) to speak. After that I didn't see much point in participating in ABS, which I presume is precisely what the Central Committee wanted.

Date: Tue, 17 Dec 1996 09:36:50 +0800 (HKT)

Subject: Re: jilted and scorned On Mon, 16 Dec 1996, X wrote:

> *The publishing thing seems to be a particularly ingrained bee in the bonnet for the US NSA. When George Ronald was founded (with Shoghi Effendi's 'connivance') the US NSA wrote to the British NSA and lectured them in very sharp terms about the unwisdom of permitting this and how they would never permit any publication of Baha'i materials that was not under their direct control.*

More than "connivance," GR was started with SE's encouragement and personal financial support--primarily, I gather, because the BPT was totally incompetent. The former manager of the BPT use to delight in tellling about how the US NSA tried to suppress GR at a time when Shoghi Effendi was so supportive of the endeavor.

It is true that the publishing issue has been almost an obsession with the NSA, though I am not sure why. When a Baha'i in Oregon reprinted the Song Celestial in the 1960's he was told by the NSA that he could not distribute the book within the Baha'i community, although it had passed review. And the US NSA has made numerous attempts to control the distribution of Kalimat (and, I think 1 or 2 GR) books that they did not like, as did the Canadian NSA under Doug Martin.

On Tuesday, 18 Feb 1997 I received a message reporting that on a BBC broadcast, Douglas Martin said that the proof of the truth or falsity of the Baha'is faith would be that universal peace would arrive by the year 2000. It was pointed out that since Martin's faith seems to rest on such matters, he might be forced into apostasy by the next war. J

Date: Tue, 1 Apr 1997

Re: Danesh resigns over sex charges On Tue, 1 Apr 1997, X wrote:

> *Martin must have arranged the cushy Landegg position to get Danesh out >of the hot seat in Canada . . . The old boy network forgives anything >but sass.*

I was not aware there were *three* patients involved in this complaint; I thought there was only one (who was a Baha'i). Danesh was actually given an opportunity to give his version of these events at the Canadian Baha'i National Convention; his accuser received no such opportunity.

[I have heard of an alleged] instance in which Danesh leaked confidential information gleaned from therapy sessions with a patient to the Baha'i World Centre personnel office (as a member of the NSA), which itself is a serious violation of professional ethics.

Date: 01 Apr 97 11:48:39 BST

Subject: Re: mischief

There is little doubt that Martin set up Danesh with the Landegg job. You may also note that the UHJ have written letters in support of Danesh's crap *Applied Spirituality* course there. The problem is Landegg's programme. Notwithstanding the fact that he (and usually a family member) speak at EVERY course, there seem to be a liberal sprinking of NSA members invited to speak . . there were NSA members flown in from Brazil, America, Canada. He invited the whole of the UK NSA there a few months ago for a seminar on consultation. People less cynical than me may say that he is campaigning.

Clever he is - to ingratiate himself further with Haifa, he invites family members . . .

Date: Tue, 27 Aug 96

Subject: house members

I think Bill Hatcher is another one that was highlighted for membership [on the UHJ], but for the same reasons, delegates refused him. During the time of the peace statement, it became widely known that Hatcher, Martin and Kazemzadeh were the 3 persons who wrote that statement -- of course this info was leaked by Haifa itself.

Hatcher is young enough that he might still make it, though its also widely known that he has heart problems.

Date: Sat, 27 Apr 1996

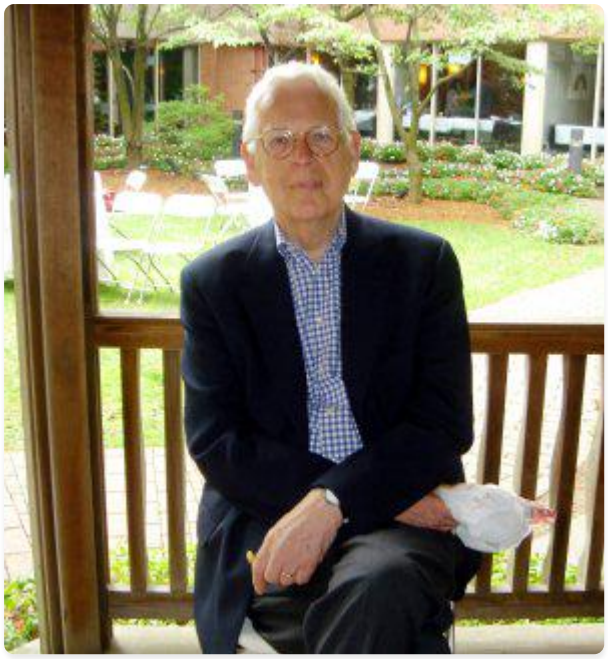
Subject: Impact of Talisman

I don't think that there is any doubt that Talisman is having an impact. When X was in Haifa a few months ago, she questioned by two different House (Peter Kahn and Douglas Martin) about Talisman, and they particularly wanted to know how *she* and her twenty-something Baha'i peers viewed it . . . it is more of an indication about the state of the Baha'i Community than about the nature of the discussions. Talisman should not be a such a big issue, but the fact is it is.

Date: 23 Aug 96

Subject: Snooping around

[I�ve heard that] someone on the House has asked Hussein Danesh to find out what you guys are up to, and in particular what the discussions on the Birkland matter were leading to on IRFAN.



Comments

February 28. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding the use of the Master's film, the greatest care must be exercised lest we cheapen its value by too frequent and indiscriminate exhibition either amongst the believers or the non-Bahá'ís. Only on special occasions, such as ..."

Original file: 0045.html (position #6)

February 28. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding the use of the Master's film, the greatest care must be exercised lest we cheapen its value by too frequent and indiscriminate exhibition either amongst the believers or the non-Bahá'ís. Only on special occasions, such as important anniversaries, should the film be shown and its solemn sacred character should be duly emphasized."

1830. Viewing the Film of Abdu'l-Bahá

"Regarding the use of the Master's film, the greatest care must be exercised lest we cheapen its value by too frequent and indiscriminate exhibition either amongst the believers or the non-Bahá'ís. Only on special occasions, such as important anniversaries, should the film be shown and its solemn sacred character should be duly emphasized."

(From a letter of Shoghi Effendi, February 28, 1928)

Comments

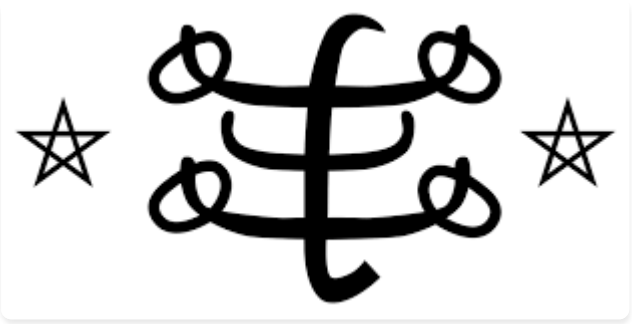
February 28. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The inscription upon the Bahá'í ringstone is the symbol of the Greatest Name, Baha, who is the Manifestation of the essence of God. It is also symbolic of the three planes representing the World of God, the World of Revelation and the World..

Original file: 0044.html (position #5)

February 28. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The inscription upon the Bahá'í ringstone is the symbol of the Greatest Name, Baha, who is the Manifestation of the essence of God. It is also symbolic of the three planes representing the World of God, the World of Revelation and the World of Creation."

> *909. Ringstone Inscription Explained*

> *"The inscription upon the Bahá'í ringstone is the symbol of the Greatest Name, Baha, who is the Manifestation of the essence of God. It is also symbolic of the three planes representing the World of God, the World of Revelation and the World of Creation."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 28, 1938)*



Comments

February 28. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "Advise you to suspend magazine for next two years. Appeal on my behalf to subscribers in East and West to devote their subscription fee to Temple Fund. Owing to present emergency such action would be highly meritorious."

Original file: 0043.html (position #4)

February 28. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "Advise you to suspend magazine for next two years. Appeal on my behalf to subscribers in East and West to devote their subscription fee to Temple Fund. Owing to present emergency such action would be highly meritorious."

> *Suspend World Order Magazine*

> *Advise you to suspend magazine for next two years. Appeal on my behalf to subscribers in East and West to devote their subscription fee to Temple Fund. Owing to present emergency such action would be highly meritorious.*
>
> *[February 28, 1949]*

World Order was a multi-volume publication running from 1935 to 1949 and from 1966 to 2008. A description given in Volume 2, Issue 9 states "World Order Magazine is devoted to the promotion of these Teachings, which are the laws and principles of the new cycle. Month by month it affords glimpses of the new way of life and the New Civilization arising from the wreckage of the dead past."

World Order was a continuation of *Star of the West* (renamed *The Bahá'í Magazine* in later volumes) and *World Unity Magazine*.

'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Wilmette in 1912 for the ground-breaking ceremony during which he laid the cornerstone of the Bahá'í House of Worship.

The actual construction of the building did not begin until 1921, after Bahá'ís agreed to use a design by Louis Bourgeois.

On January 16, 1931, the dome of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, which was nearing completion, caught fire. Wilmette and Evanston firefighters worked to save the structure, and damage was estimated at $50,000.

The temple was eventually dedicated on May 2, 1953.

Comments

February 29. On this date in 1996, Iain S. Palin of the UK Bahá'í Information Office wrote a letter titled "The Mahrami Case - What it is and Why it Matter" about the case of Dhabihu'llah (also rendered Zabihullah or Zabihollah) Mahrami.

Original file: 0042.html (position #3)

February 29. On this date in 1996, Iain S. Palin of the UK Bahá'í Information Office wrote a letter titled "The Mahrami Case - What it is and Why it Matter" about the case of Dhabihu'llah (also rendered Zabihullah or Zabihollah) Mahrami.

Thursday 29 February, 1996 From Dr Iain S. Palin, UK Bahá'í Information Office THE MAHRAMI CASE - WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS Local Bahá'í communities all over the U.K. are contacting their M.P.s and Euro-M.P.s, and publicising the plight of a man sentenced to death in Iran. The case of Mr D. Mahrami may be just one sad item in a world-wide catalogue of abuses of human rights - but it is one which has implications for hundreds of thousands of people in Iran, Bahá'ís, Christians, and Jews alike.

It is the business of anyone who is concerned about human rights and religious freedom of conscience.

The enclosed report gives the facts.

THE MAHRAMI CASE - THE BACKGROUND Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran that country has been under the rule of Muslim clergy of the Shi'ite sect. The state religion is Shi'ite Islam, and its teachings and rules form the basis of the country's constitution and laws. Religious minorities have faced varying difficulties. The Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian (Parsee) communities have had some measure of recognition, but they are second class citizens in their own country. However the followers of the Bahá'í Faith, Iran's largest non- Muslim religious minority, were singled out for persecution. The Bahá'í Faith had its beginnings in Iran a century and a half ago. Since then it has spread, to the extent that it is now the world's second most widespread religion after Christianity. Most Bahá'ís live outside the Middle East and have never had any connection with Islam. Despite this, the Muslim clergy of Iran refuse to consider it a religion, and because its teaching go against their own in many key aspects, they are determined to root it out of their country.

Thus the entire Bahá'í administration in Iran is banned, and many of its leading figures have been executed. At first the authorities maintained that this was for crimes they were supposed to have committed, but lately it has been admitted that it was done because they were Bahá'ís, and that the government does indeed have a programme to "cleanse" Iran of Bahá'í influence.

All Bahá'í property has been seized (not just community resources, but the homes of individuals), Bahá'í students are barred from going to university, many in work have been dismissed from the jobs, while retired people have had their pensions stopped.

In some particularly outrageous cases pensioners have been told they must repay to the state all pensions received since they retired, Bahá'í bodies have been removed from cemeteries and dumped, while their tombstones were taken and sold, and Bahá'í families have asked to pay for the cost of the bullets with which their relatives were executed.

For the past two - three years there has been some easing off of the pressure although the major discriminations against Bahá'ís remain. Bahá'ís are still in prison for their faith, two under sentence of death since 1992. It is against this background that the Mahrami case comes - with a fresh and worrying twist.

THE MAHRAMI CASE - THE FACTS Early in January Mr Dhabihu'llah (also rendered Zabihollah) Mahrami, was arrested and interrogated in the city of Yazd, Iran. The news has just emerged that after that interrogation he was sentenced to death. Mr Mahrami, who was a lifelong Bahá'í having been born into a Bahá'í family, was, like most of his co-

religionists, subject to much harassment by the authorities. Eventually a notice was published in a local newspaper bearing his photograph and announcing his recantation of his faith as a Bahá'í and his conversion to Islam. (In such rare cases of recantation as do occur, the authorities will usually insist on the person taking out such an advertisement.)

As a result of this Mr Mahrami was suspended from the Bahá'í community and over a period of time enquiries were made. He maintained that the notice had been placed without his knowledge or consent, and that while a form stating his recantation appeared to bear his signature, he had not knowingly signed that form and had not in fact recanted. It appears that some of Mr Mahrami's Muslim work colleagues may have placed the advertisement, apparently out of concern for him and a desire to see him spared further harassment.

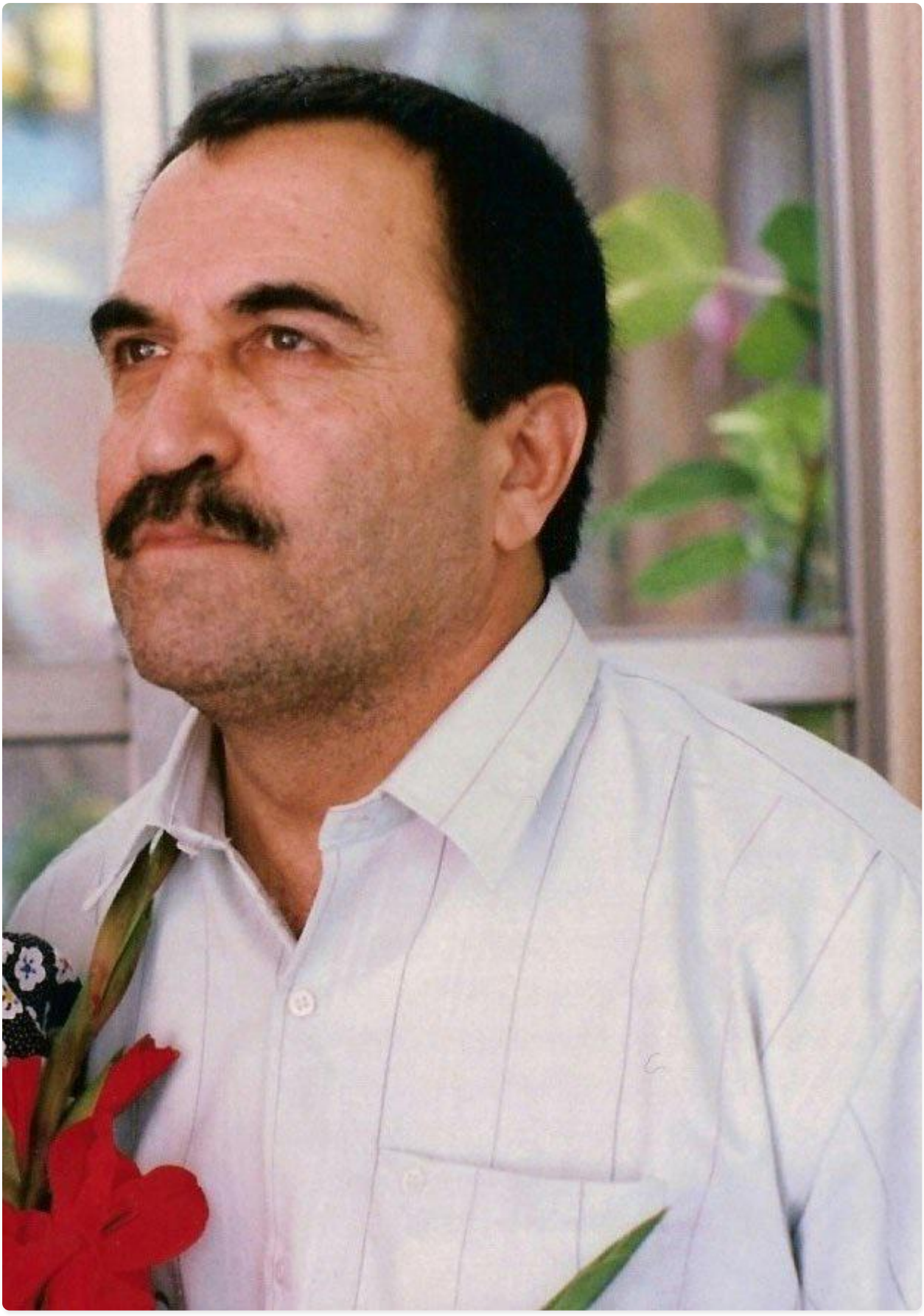
When the Bahá'í community in Yazd was satisfied that events had taken place as Mr Mahrami said, and that he was indeed genuinely a Bahá'í, he was reinstated in the community. He made this reinstatement known to his colleagues and the authorities soon learned about it.

Mr Mahrami was then arrested and interrogated for alleged apostasy from Islam, a crime which carries the death penalty in the Islamic code as it is applied in Iran. Throughout his interrogations he made it clear that he was Bahá'í, and he resisted great pressure, including threats of death, which were employed to try to have him state he was a Muslim.

As a result the court in Yazd has declared Mr Mahrami guilty of apostasy and decreed that he should be executed, and his possessions should be con fiscated leaving his family destitute. The case has now been appealed to the Iranian Supreme Court, and Bahá'í communities in the U.K. are asking their M.P.s and Euro- M.P.'s to take all the steps they can to try to stop the sentence being carried out.

This case sets a worrying precedent, whereby someone in Iran can be taken as having converted to Islam, even if they did not genuinely do so, and then when they affirm their own faith they can be condemned to death for having apostatised from Islam. Although the Christian and Jewish minorities in Iran are not subject to the same pressure and persecution as the Bahá'ís, it is worth pointing out that they have no special status in the matter of conversion and recantation - in other words, the same thing could happen to one of them as has happened to Mr Mahrami.

The Bahá'í community in the United Kingdom believes that everyone should know the case of this unfortunate victim of base religious persecution.



Comments

February 29. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote "The House of Justice regards the need to educate and guide women in their primary responsibility as mothers as an excellent opportunity for organizing women's activities....Women should also be encouraged to attract their husbands...to the Faith..."

Original file: 0041.html (position #2)

February 29. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice wrote (also here, here and here) "The House of Justice regards the need to educate and guide women in their primary responsibility as mothers as an excellent opportunity for organizing women's activities. Your efforts should focus on helping them in their function as educators of the

rising generation. Women should also be encouraged to attract their husbands and male members of their families to the Faith..."

> *2083. The Need to Educate and Guide Women in Their Primary Responsibility as Mothers*
>
> *"The House of Justice regards the need to educate and guide women in their primary responsibility as mothers as an excellent opportunity for organizing women's activities. Your efforts should focus on helping them in their function as educators of the rising generation. Women should also be encouraged to attract their husbands and male members of their families to the Faith so that the Bahá'í community will be representative of the society of which it forms a part. Gradually the spirit of unity and fellowship, as set forth in our teachings, will be reflected in the life of Bahá'í families."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, February 29, 1984: Women)*

Comments

February 29. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi named seven individuals to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God, including Músá Banání, Corinne True, Clara Dunn, Shu'á'u'lláh ʻAlá″í, Dhikru'lláh Khádim, Adelbert Mühlschlegel, and Siegried Schopflocher.

Original file: 0040.html (position #1)

February 29. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi named seven individuals to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God, including Músá Banání, Corinne True, Clara Dunn, Shu'á'u'lláh ʻAlá″í, Dhikru'lláh Khádim, Adelbert Mühlschlegel, and Siegried Schopflocher.

> *Second Appointment of Hands of the Cause*
>
> *Announce friends East and West, through National Assemblies, following nominations raising the number of the present Hands of the Cause of God to nineteen. Dominion Canada and United States, Fred Schopflocher and Corinne*

> *True, respectively. Cradle of Faith, Dhikru'llah Khadem, Shu'a'u'llah Ala'i. Germany, Africa, Australia, Adelbert Muhlschlegel, Musa Banani, Clara Dunn, respectively. Members august body invested in conformity with `Abdu'l-Bahá's Testament, twofold sacred function, the propagation and preservation of the unity of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and destined to assume individually in the course of time the direction of institutions paralleling those revolving around the Universal House of Justice, the supreme legislative body of the Bahá'í world, are now recruited from all five continents of the globe and representative of the three principal world religions of mankind. Recently urged newly-appointed Hand of Canada, on occasion of his pilgrimage to Holy Land, to undertake preliminary measures, in conjunction with Canadian National Assembly for the establishment of national Haziratu'l-Quds similar to those already founded in Teheran, Wilmette, Baghdád, Sydney, Frankfurt, Cairo and New Delhi. Identical instructions were given appointed Hand of Africa in course of his just concluded pilgrimage, for the acquisition of property in Kampala to serve as local Haziratu'l-Quds to synchronize with formation of first Assembly in heart of Africa, to be regarded as nucleus of national administrative headquarters of Faith destined to arise on morrow of formation of National Spiritual Assembly of Central and Eastern Territories of African continent.*
>
> *--Shoghi*
>
> *[Cablegram, February 29, 1952]*

During her Pilgrimage in 1953, Marguerite Sears, wife of Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, recorded Shoghi Effendi as having said...

> *A Hand is one who serves the Cause in an outstanding manner. The American Hands were appointed: Leroy for services rendered during the first seven year plan, Dorothy for her teaching ability, Millie and Fred for their great financial contributions during times of greatest need. They upheld the Faith. Roy was a saint, Sutherland for the Shrine of the Bab, Horace for his services in the Administration, Mrs. True for her Temple Service, Mason for continued service over a long time and for visiting all countries for the Faith.*
>
> *In the future outstanding scientists, writers, leaders in their fields, will immediately become Hands as soon as they become Bahá'ís. It does not necessarily mean that*

> *they are greater spiritually, but they must become so."*

Comments

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